

Children page

Psychiatric drugs and your child

Time to Call a Halt to Psychiatrically Diagnosing and Drugging Children

The latest scientific literature indicates that boys averaging age 7-9 given a diagnosis of mild hyperactivity in the 1970s and treated with Ritalin (methylphenidate) have, as a group, come to a tragic outcome. Compared to a control group of normal children from the same time period, they have much higher rates of early death, atrophy of the brain, suicide, psychiatric hospitalization, incarceration, and drug addiction. By almost every measure, they have reduced quality of life and a shortened life.

Instead of hope and enthusiasm for their futures, too many children now grow up believing they are inherently defective, and controlled by bad genes and biochemical imbalances. They are shackled by the idea that they have ADHD and then subdued by the drugs that inevitably go along with the diagnosis. Unless something intervenes, many of them will go on to pass their days on Earth in a drug-impaired, demoralized state.

Why do children labeled ADHD and given stimulants as a group have such a dreadful outcome? There are multiple reasons, including:

(1) The initial stimulant causes adverse effects such as depression, anxiety, agitation, insomnia, psychosis, and aggression which are not recognized as side effects. Instead, they are viewed as the unmasking of other mental disorders, leading to the prescription of cocktails of drugs that over the years ruin the individuals life.

(2) The drugs “work” by stifling spontaneous behavior and enforcing OCD so that the child socializes less, thinks and imagines in a more constricted fashion, and simple cannot take advantage of ordinary growth experiences because of the limits on his social and psychological capacities.

(3) The initial diagnosis of ADHD ruins the child's sense of personal responsibility and self-control, so that the child no longer thinks he can control himself. This almost inevitably disrupts emotional growth and renders the child less able to grow up into a mature adult.

(4) The initial diagnosis of ADHD undermines parental emphasis on teaching discipline and devoting the necessary time to the child. Professionals absolve the parents of parental responsibility, so they do not take classes or get therapy to help them improving their parenting.

(5) The initial diagnosis of ADHD discourages teachers from teaching discipline to children who need attention, and so the child is robbed of learning self-discipline in the classroom.

I have put up a new series of three videos on YouTube about the psychiatric diagnosing and drugging of children.

The first children's video is # 7 in my Simple Truths series; it describes the harmful effects and method of action of stimulant drugs. These drugs include methylphenidate and amphetamine products such as Ritalin, Concerta, Focalin, Metadate, Methylin, Quillivant, Daytrana, Vyvanse, Adderall and Dexedrine.

The second video about children is # 8 in the Simple Truths series. It describes the negative effects of diagnosing children with ADHD.

The third children's video, # 9 of Simple Truths, describes the horrendous outcomes of merely starting a mildly "hyperactive" child on Ritalin, including follow up studies over several decades. This video calls for concerned citizens to take a stand against giving psychiatric drugs to children. I believe it is time to set our sights on a day when children will be protected by a ban against giving them any psychoactive substances, including psychiatric drugs, which are more dangerous, damaging and demoralizing than alcohol, marijuana and cigarettes.

The video series has scientific support in my book *Psychiatric Drug Withdrawal*, which cites and summarizes some of the most recent studies on how damaged "ADHD kids" become when reaching adulthood — including increased incarceration in jails and mental hospitals, increased suicide, increased drug addiction, increased dependence on multiple psychiatric drugs, obesity, shrinkage (atrophy) of the brain, shortened lifespan, and a general reduction in quality and length of life.

In addition, my new peer-reviewed article in the journal *Children & Society* presents a scientific and ethical overview of the harm done to children by stimulants and by antipsychotic drugs, such as Abilify, Seroquel, Risperdal, Invega, Zyprexa, Geodon, Latuda, Saphris, Fanapt, and Symbax. It cites many scientific studies. The antipsychotic drugs are often given to children when their behavior and mental state deteriorates as a result of being given stimulants.

The drugging of children in America and increasingly throughout the world is a tragedy. Millions upon millions of children and youth will never know their full potential because they grew up with an intoxicated brain — their neurotransmitters forever deformed by being bathed in these drugs during their formative years. Additional millions will become career consumers of psychiatric drugs with a vastly reduced quality of life and shortened lives.

It is time to say, "No more of this!" and to directly confront the need for stopping this inhumane, destructive approach to our children and youth.

*Adapted from a blog by Dr. Breggin on MadinAmerica.com.

Throughout his career, Dr. Breggin has been especially concerned about the psychiatric abuse of children and the failure to provide more effective solutions through improved parenting, educational reform and community resources. As the drug companies and organized psychiatry have sought larger markets for pharmaceutical products, children have come under extensive from the psychopharmaceutical complex. The first great assault took place in the form of diagnosing children with ADHD and then medicating them

with stimulant drugs. Soon millions of children were defined as mentally dysfunctional or defective and were submitted to brain-damaging psychoactive medications.

A new pattern emerged as doctors began to treat the adverse drug reactions to stimulants—including over-stimulation, insomnia, agitation, behavioral abnormalities, depression, suicidality and violence, mania and psychosis—with increased numbers of additional psychiatric drugs. They usually did this without explaining to the parents that the drugs were causing the newly developed symptoms. Nowadays, many children come to Dr. Breggin for consultations when they are taking four or five psychiatric drugs at once.

Not satisfied with this huge expansion of the drug marketplace, psychiatrists advocating on behalf of drug companies recently began to diagnose thousands of children with bipolar disorder. The purpose? To justify giving more “mood stabilizer” and “antipsychotic” drugs to children. The FDA has cooperated by approving Risperdal for some diagnostic categories in childhood.

As An overall result, millions of children are growing up with drug-intoxicated brains. They are given no hope that they can learn to control their own behavior and grow up to be effective adults—goals they will never achieve with medication-drenched brains.

At the same time, parents and teachers have become indoctrinated into believing that they cannot effectively raise or teach the children in their care and must instead resort to medical management by “experts.” This massive disenfranchisement of parents and teachers has huge consequences in terms of depriving

children of the care they need and depriving parents and teachers of the opportunity to exercise their skills and authority, and to improve their approaches to individual children, families and classrooms.

Many drug-treated children will suffer from irreversible brain changes that hamper their mental life. In the case of stimulants, many will have their growth stunted and become prone to cocaine addiction in young adulthood. As a result of neuroleptics like Zyprexa, Risperdal and Abilify, many will suffer from development delays and from tardive dyskinesia with its irreversible abnormal movements that impair and stigmatize them. Dr. Breggin has evaluated dozens of children in his practice who have developed tardive dyskinesia from the newer antipsychotic drugs.

Of all the harmful actions of modern psychiatry, the mass diagnosing and drugging of children is the most appalling with the most serious consequences for the future of individual lives and for society.

All of the issues that are summarized here are discussed in more depth with scientific citations in Dr. Breggin's two new books, *Medication Madness* (2008) and *Brain-Disabling Treatments in Psychiatry* (2008). Several older books deal even more extensively with improved parenting and educational approaches to children, including *The Ritalin Fact Book* (2002), *Talking Back to Ritalin* (2001), and *Reclaiming Our Children* (2000).

See Dr. Breggin's blog at the Huffington Post for up-to-date commentaries on children's issues.

The following books by Dr. Breggin contain more detailed discussions of the use of psychiatric drugs for children:

- Psychiatric Drug Withdrawal (2013)
- Brain-Disabling Treatments in Psychiatry (2008)
- Medication Madness (2008)

- The Ritalin Fact Book (2002)
- Talking Back to Ritalin (2001)
- Reclaiming Our Children (2000)
- The War Against Children of Color (1994)
- Toxic Psychiatry (1994)

Articles on children's issues and psychiatric medications

- Best Scientific Summary of Harmful Effects of Psychiatric Drugs on Children (2014) (PDF)
- A Misdiagnosis, Anywhere (PDF)
- Confirming the hazards of stimulant drug treatment (PDF)
- A biomedical programme for urban violence control in the US (PDF)
- The psychiatric drugging of toddlers (PDF)
- What people need to know about the drug treatment of children(PDF)
- Psychostimulants in the treatment of children diagnosed with ADHD (PDF)
- NIH consensus report highlights controversy surrounding ADHD diagnosis and stimulant treatment (PDF)
- The NIMH multimodal study of treatment for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (PDF)

- What psychologists and therapists need to know about ADHD and stimulants (PDF)

- The hazards of treating 'attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder with methylphenidate (Ritalin)

- Brain development continues through teen years

- U.S. attention deficit on legal drug risks by Arianna Huffington
- ICSP calls for a moratorium on the psychiatric drugging of children
- Children poisoning themselves with illegal psychiatric drugs
- Psychiatry makes war on "bipolar children"
- School calls child services on parents who take child off Ritalin
- Recent FDA decision highlights ethical issues in drug research on children
- Something we can all agree on: stop the drugging of children
- Breggin testifies before Congress re: Ritalin and ADHD

- Campaigns against racist federal programs by the Center for the Study of Psychiatry (1996/1996)

- The White House conference on mental health (2000)

- Peter Breggin's Testimony on ADHD and Stimulant Drugs before the House Committee on Education (2000)