

Stephen Leith 239190
Carson Correctional Facility
PO Box 5000
Carson City, MI 48811

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Jane Henney, M.D., Commissioner
Food and Drug Administration
5600 Fishers Lane, Rm 1471
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Dr. Henney:

I am writing to tell you what PROZAC did to me and to urge you to take it off the market.

In the years prior to 1992, I became depressed as I watched my wife slowly die of cancer. In January of 1992, I sought psychiatric help and was immediately prescribed PROZAC. After about 2 weeks it kicked in, and I was full of energy. I felt as though I could accomplish anything I put my mind to and began a major project.

People in the school where I taught knew something had happened to me: I ran everywhere, even in the school! The kids joked that I was "hitting the acid cabinet" in the back of my chemistry room, and the Superintendent, thinking I was on street drugs, called me into his office and demanded to know what was going on.

I lost all discretion regarding what I said, even speaking to strangers about personal things. I became obnoxious and the students started fearing me, especially when I began touching some of them. I now lacked control.

After about six weeks, I sprained my ankle and the good feeling turned bad. My sleep became increasingly more fitful and the depression returned. The psychiatrist suggested taking me off PROZAC, but I begged him to leave me on it, fearing that the depression would be much worse without it.

I started seeing things moving out of the corner of my eye, and I was constantly jerking my head in the perceived direction to see what it was. There was nothing, of course, but I was fooled into looking anyway. I was constantly agitated.

I became disillusioned, thinking people didn't like me and were out to get me. When I was reprimanded for my inappropriate behavior (which began after taking PROZAC), I was certain the administration was trying to fire me. I was becoming paranoid. I had gone deeply into debt, acquiring many things I did not need after going on the drug, and now I was convinced they were out to take my job from me.

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My temper became shorter and anything could set me off. My anger burned so intensely it was scary. I had never experienced anything like it either before going on PROZAC or since I was taken off of it. I had a headache all the time and was confused much of the time. Something inside felt as if it wanted to crawl out of me, leaving a shell behind; my brain felt like it was sloshing in my skull.

After nearly two years of decline, I snapped and killed the Superintendent at a grievance meeting pertaining to my bizarre behavior. Only minutes later I was going about the normal routine in my classroom, wondering if the shooting had really transpired; it did not seem real. Of course I was arrested and whisked away. When the lawyer arrived at the jail, I asked him if anyone got hurt!

I have been incarcerated now for over six years on a life sentence. I have met others here who have been on PROZAC and several of them, without my prompting, have shared how the drug also intensified their anger and caused similar impulse control problems.

So here I am, a trained educator, being punished for something I would not have done if I had not been on PROZAC. The Superintendent, a talented man, is dead and his family is bitter over his loss and their wrecked lives. The two others who were wounded are mistrustful in their dealings with others. My wife was disgraced in the community due to my actions, and she died from the cancer two years later without me having been there to help her and comfort her. My friends deserted me and my name and reputation ruined.

As you can see, many lives besides my own have been negatively impacted due to what PROZAC did to me. This drug is dangerous. Both you and I know it, and it is time to do the right thing. Declare this drug unsafe and take it off the market.

Sincerely,



Stephen Leith

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