

A huge majority of the clients that I see are either on anti-depressants or have been offered them by the doctor.

Anti-depressants are prescribed usually when a doctor assumes that there is a 'chemical imbalance' in the brain. Sometimes there is, and in these cases the medication can really help stabilise someone who is not functioning and unable to help themselves.

However, in a vast amount of cases, depression or anxiety is not as a result of a chemical imbalance in the brain, but as a result of a life event which has been difficult; or unresolved issues stemming from childhood; or a trauma or shock or illness etc. If an anti-depressant is prescribed in these cases, it is my belief that it could have a detrimental effect.

As human beings, it is perfectly natural to feel emotions - be it fear, upset, hurt, happiness, joy, or anger. The natural way is to then acknowledge those feelings, process them, and let them subside once issues have been resolved or accepted.

Anti-depressants suppress any extreme emotion, including happiness or joy. This makes it very difficult for a human being to process their emotions naturally and sometimes to even feel anything - including happiness.

Therefore, if you have suffered a difficult life event, then the ability to feel better is somewhat hindered by the anti-depressant. Also the ability to process those very natural normal feelings is squashed and subdued. There can then be a danger of the client developing a fear of coming off the medication because they are frightened that they will feel as terrible as they did initially ... so they stay on them.

To my horror, I am discovering on a weekly basis that some clients who were prescribed this medication, sometimes up to 20 years ago, are still taking them even though their issues have completely subsided! They are often too frightened to come off them in case they 'slip back' into a depression or an anxious state. However, as you grow older and

Things change and sometimes your tablets should too



A prescription for anti-depressants doesn't necessarily mean they will be right for you for life, explains King's Lynn-based psychotherapist and counsellor **Amanda Jayne**.



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wiser and your life changes, the issues that were once there 20 years ago often disappear. Doctors are not always recognising the need for a proper review (not just a tick box form) and therefore just keep handing out the prescriptions and people keep taking them thinking that the doctor knows best.

In 'The Sedated Society: The Causes and Harms of our Psychiatric Drug Epidemic' Editors: Davies, James, in the chapters from a team of global experts in psychopharmacology it

claims that it: 'rigorously examines how pharmaceutical sponsorship and marketing, diagnostic inflation, the manipulation and burying of negative clinical trials, lax medication regulation, and neoliberal public health policies have all been implicated in ever-rising psycho-pharmaceutical consumption. This volume will ignite a long-overdue public debate.'

It states that more than 15% of the public in the UK takes a psychiatric medication on any given day and numbers are increasing.

There is emerging scientific data revealing poor outcomes and even harm that these medications can cause.

Therefore it is important to have your medication regularly assessed and your circumstances reviewed, and a good chat with your GP as well as trusting your own gut feeling about things. It is very important that if you are on anti-depressants, you must see your doctor to speak to them about it and, if necessary, to agree a slow weaning off them as there maybe very severe side-effects of suddenly stopping anti-depressants. **LI**

Ask Amanda Jayne

I would love to hear from you and will reply to your letters which, if we print them, will remain anonymous, and your details will be treated confidentially. Write to Amanda Jayne MA MBSCP at Feelgood Therapy, Room 11b, St Ann's House, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE30 1LT; email amandajoss@gmail.com; the team of professional counsellors at www.kingslynnwestnorfolkcounselling.co.uk, on 01553 827689 or 07760 669246.