



Your Drug May Be Your Problem: How and Why to Stop Taking Psychiatric Medications

By Peter Breggin, David Cohen

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When first published in 1999, *Your Drug May Be Your Problem* was ahead of its time. The only book to provide an uncensored description of the dangers involved in taking every kind of psychiatric medication, it was also the first and only book to explain how to safely stop taking them. In the time elapsed, there have been numerous studies suggesting or proving the dangers of some psychiatric medications and even the FDA now acknowledges the problems; more studies are under way to determine their long-term and withdrawal effects. In the meantime, this book continues to be ever relevant and helpful. Fully updated to include study results and new medications that have come to market, *Your Drug May Be Your Problem* will help countless readers exert control over their own psychiatric treatment.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Psychiatric drugs are prescribed to more than 20 million Americans. This book aims to convince us to stop taking these drugs, and to show us how to do it safely. The authors contend that after 15 minutes with a physician or psychiatrist, Americans are prescribed medications that we may take for years or a lifetime, which can do more harm than good. We're irritable, anxious, emotionally numbed, physically fatigued, and mentally dulled. Yet when we stop taking the drugs, we encounter a whole new set of problems and setbacks.

The book lists the adverse medical reactions you may encounter, plus additional personal, psychological, and philosophical reasons for limiting or rejecting psychiatric drugs. About half the book covers withdrawing from your drug--how to do it carefully and slowly, what to expect, and how to get help--with specifics for certain drugs and a chapter on easing your child off them as well.

If you suffer from depression or another condition that warrants taking prescription drugs, you might refute the authors' contention that "the degree to which we suffer indicates the degree to which we are alive. When we take drugs to ease our suffering, we stifle our psychological and spiritual life." Certainly it would be lovely if we could "find a way to untangle that twisted energy and to redirect it more creatively," but is this really possible in all cases? The authors blame our dependence on drugs and psychiatry on big pharmaceutical-company bucks, psychiatric organizations, and even government agencies. Certainly we are an overmedicated society--but is the answer to take everyone off drugs? This provocative book says yes, and it's bound to be controversial.

Of course, do not go off any prescribed medication without working closely with the medical professional who prescribed it, and do not use this book as a substitute for professional help. --*Joan Price*

From Publishers Weekly

In his previous books (*Toxic Psychiatry*, *Talking Back to Prozac*), psychiatrist Breggin laid the groundwork for his battle against what he sees as American psychiatry's harmful overdependence on prescribing medication. This time out, he reiterates his primary tenets and, having teamed up with David Cohen, a professor of social work at the University of Montreal, provides practical advice for those who are considering stopping medication. According to the authors, psychiatric drugs have replaced religion, spirituality, human relationships and introspection as the solution of first resort for the suffering endemic to a full human life. Because scientists know very little about the brain, Breggin and Cohen argue, the much-touted theory that depression and mental illness arise from chemical imbalances is "sheer speculation" and the propagandistic cornerstone of a massive public relations campaign by drug companies. In a well-researched argument that suffers from a somewhat dogmatic tone, they contend that, rather than improve the brain's functioning, these drugs actually create such imbalances, causing immediate and sometimes irreversible damage. In place of medication, Breggin and Cohen recommend therapy, as well as a commitment to religious, spiritual or philosophic ideas, and offer a step-by-step approach to ending dependence on medication, to be undertaken only with medical guidance. Although the authors warn readers against feeling pressured to forgo medication, they never explore the alternatives. (Sept.)

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From Library Journal

In psychiatric circles today, being anti-drug has become a countercultural stance. This rebellious review of

psychiatric drugs argues that patients should be better informed before starting or stopping medications. Breggin, a psychiatrist and author of *Talking Back to Prozac* and *Talking Back to Ritalin*, and Cohen (social work, Univ. of Montreal) summarize important information in an easy-to-read format. The hazards of drugs in general, details of potential withdrawal reactions, and specific suggestions on how to withdraw safely are covered. The book concludes with a hopeful discussion on how emotional crises can be handled in a drug-free manner. The author's warnings about the need for medical supervision are responsibly presented, and their explanations of the limits of the FDA approval process are enlightening. However, their attack on psychiatry as a profession for its capitulation to the profit-driven pharmaceutical industry may be overdone. This is nonetheless a well-researched and thought-provoking book. Recommended for consumer health collections. AAntoinette Brinkman, Southwest Indiana Mental Health Ctr. Lib., Evansville
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