

School Shootings in the US: Are SSRI Drugs to Blame for Gun Violence?

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School shootings in the US are on the rise, so it seems. There have been over 40 school shootings in the US in my lifetime. I'm over 40. For the first 19 years of my life there wasn't a single school shooting in the US. Why have we seen this deadly phenomena of school shootings in the US develop? Are SSRI drugs to blame for school shootings and gun violence? Recent news reports about Christopher Dorner and Sandy Hook revolve almost entirely around gun control. But they are ignoring an even bigger red flag. Is gun control the answer? According to biochemist Dr. William J. Walsh PhD and psychiatrist Dr. Robert A. DeVito MD there is a mental health crisis at the crux of the issue. They carefully explain in detail.

The epidemic of school shootings in the US has many experts in pharmacology and neuroscience talking. Dr. Candace Pert PhD believes SSRIs play a dangerous roll.

Pert explains her stance on school shootings in the US to blog readers: "When the SSRI's were first discovered by some of my former NIMH post-docs using assays that I had pioneered in, everyone's intentions were good and good cases have been made for this class of drugs being lifesavers for some folks. But from the first few months after the first SSRI was allowed to be sold in 1988, some psychiatrists believed they were seeing unexpected suicides as well as incidents of aggression in their patients. I attended a very intense and argumentative special session on this topic at an ACNP meeting. I had two scientist friends tell me that daily SSRI injections into rats seemed to make them extremely aggressive. All this is circumstantial evidence is suggestive but does not prove my suspicion that SSRI's plus automatic weapons are the lethal combination that are causing the mass shootings but perhaps include other contributing variables like unfettered access to violent video games."

In their joint white paper about school shootings in the US, Walsh and DeVito created a list of shooters who were reportedly on medications for depression. The information on both the Sandy Hook shooter and the Colorado Theater shooter is unknown.

School Shootings in the US: Most Shooters Were Prescribed SSRI Drugs

What does this mean? Dr. Walsh believes that there are several types of depression. Only one type benefits from SSRI medication. Dr. Walsh defines clinical depression as an umbrella term. This is an important concept to grasp. What that means, according to Walsh and DeVito, is that SSRI drugs will only work in a percentage of people suffering from depression. In some cases SSRI drugs will make a patient much more depressed, and possibly suicidal or homicidal.

If you or a loved one suffers from depression you understand all too well the pain. Depression is debilitating. This is why I am fascinated by the work of Walsh and DeVito.

Both doctors have spent their professional lives studying mental illness and depression from a biochemical standpoint. Antidepressant drugs, particularly SSRI medications, are often prescribed to people suffering from depression. As I mentioned earlier, these medications have been beneficial for some, but for others it has resulted in a deeper form of depression. Pharmaceutical companies are aware of these possible side effects. Patients can read them in

the fine print. This calls to question the practice of prescribing SSRI drugs to any patient with clinical depression.

Walsh Explains Why SSRIs Can Make Some More Depressed

There are a growing number of mental health experts who believe the recent increase in gun violence we are seeing in the U.S. is tied to SSRI medications. Dr. Walsh explains why.

In most cases of school shootings in the US the school shooters came from normal childhoods. They were good students, and only developed problems after treatment with antidepressants and other powerful drugs.

Drs. DeVito and Walsh explain why the phenomena of school shootings in the US may be happening in their paper: A Proposal for Prevention of School Shootings (January 2013). Walsh and DeVito claim, "Psychiatrists have known for years that a rare side effect involves development of suicidal ideation and in some cases homicidal tendencies."

SSRI medications are very successful at increasing serotonin activity in the brain. In a large subset of the population this works along with counseling to help depressive patients resume a normal life.

But why do some patients get worse on SSRI medication?

According to Walsh, a biochemical expert with over 30 years experience treating and studying depression, there's a very logical explanation for why we may be seeing an increase in school shootings in the US. Of course he also takes into consideration many other variables that can lead to an increase in violence, including societal and personal value shifts. His theory is by no means the final answer. But his 30 years working with mental illness, especially studying the prison population have tremendous merit, I believe.

Walsh says, "Depression is not a single condition, but an umbrella term that encompasses several quite different disorders."

An increase in school shootings in the US, is Gun Control the Answer? Dr. William Walsh PhD and Psychiatrist Robert DeVito explain a possible theory for violent offenders prescribed SSRI drugs.

What are the five biotypes for depression?

- Undermethylation (The body lacks the ability to properly add methyl groups to proteins, DNA, and other molecules. For example, if serotonin doesn't get methylated it will lead to depression. This group reacts well to SSRI medication.)
- Folate Deficiency (These patients had a worsening of depressive symptoms on SSRI drugs and needed vitamin therapy to increase folate levels. This group is at risk for suicidal tendencies from SSRI drugs.)

- Copper Overload (When patients develop high copper levels in the body through either diet or environment, it will lead to depression.)
- Pyrrole Disorder (This is a genetic blood hemoglobin disorder that causes severe zinc deficiency and can lead to depression.)
- Toxic Overload (About 5% of the population showed heavy metal poisoning due to lead, mercury, cadmium, or arsenic in Walsh's depression database of over 2,800 people).

What's the Solution for Better Treatment of Depression?

Drs Walsh and deVito believe that to prevent more school shootings in the US and worldwide, "Doctors should perform blood testing prior to prescribing antidepressants, especially for young males. Inexpensive testing for whole-blood histamine and blood serum folate levels can efficiently identify persons at risk for suicidal ideation and violence."

In their paper, Drs Walsh and deVito call to question mainstream psychiatry's "treatment of choice" for depression. They believe it may contribute to the rise in school shootings in the U.S. In nearly all cases of clinical depression the first course of action is to prescribe SSRI antidepressants. In their white paper, Drs Walsh and deVito's stance is clear. They believe that gun control is not going to solve the school shooting crisis.

Walsh expresses his opinion on stopping school shootings in the US: "The two most frequently offered solutions are getting rid of guns and keeping the guns away from mentally challenged persons." He then explains that effectively reducing the number of guns in the US would take years, and that's only if legislation could be passed. He also says, "although a significant percentage of depressives become suicidal, very few are motivated to visit schools and murder children. It would be impossible to identify the rare individuals who have this inclination."

Walsh and deVito want to halt current practices of prescribing SSRI medication for anyone with clinical depression. A simple panel of blood tests could reveal whether or not SSRI medication would be beneficial. It is our best protection against an increase in school shootings in the US due to SSRI and other psychiatric drug side effects.

Healthy Family Scheduled to Meet with Dr. Walsh For Depression Interview

February 22 we'll be sitting down for a formal interview about depression. If you have any questions you'd like me to ask Dr. Walsh, fill out a private contact form and send it, or post a public comment below. I'll be sure to ask Dr. Walsh some of your questions when we meet to discuss his research and findings.

Visit the Walsh Research Institute for more information about this work and learn about his book: *Nutrient Power Heal Your Biochemistry and Heal Your Brain*.