

~ Legal Drug Addiction ~

Created by the Dept of Health
and sanctioned by UK Government

“The story of benzodiazepines is of awesome proportions and has been described as a national scandal. The impact is so large that it is too big for governments, regulatory authorities and the pharmaceutical industry to address head on, so the scandal has been swept under the carpet.”

Source: Mr. Phil Woolas, MP, Westminster Hall, December 7, 1999.

BACKGROUND

A) Benzodiazepine drugs are also known as tranquillisers and sleeping tablets, e.g. Diazepam, Lorazepam, Nitrazepam, Chlordiazepoxide, Flunitrazepam. The side-effects of Zolpidem, Zopiclone, Zalepon and Eszopiclone are the same as those of benzodiazepines, as recognised by the National Institute of Excellence (NICE).

B) **Oldham has 5,000 long-term legal benzodiazepine drug addicts.**

Source: Oldham PCT.

C) **The UK has one million long-term legal benzodiazepine drug addicts.**

Source: University of Newcastle Professor C. H. Ashton.

D) Socioeconomic costs of long-term benzodiazepine use include:

1. Increased risk of accidents – traffic, home and work.
2. Increased risk of fatality from overdose if combined with other drugs.
3. Increased risk of attempted suicide, especially in depression.
4. Increased risk of aggressive behaviour and assault.
5. Increased risk of shoplifting and other anti-social acts.
6. Adverse effects in pregnancy and in the new-born.
7. Dependence and abuse potential – therapeutic and recreational.
8. Costs of drug prescription.

Source: University of Newcastle Professor C. H. Ashton.

E) **Deaths by poisoning (United Kingdom):**

1. 1990 to 1996, all Class ‘A’ drugs including heroin and cocaine – 1,663 deaths.

Source: The Home Office.

2. 1990 to 1996, benzodiazepines Class ‘C’ drugs – 1,810 deaths.

Source: The Home Office.

3. 1997 to 2000, benzodiazepines (Temazepam, Diazepam, Nitrazepam only) – 829 deaths.

Source: Office for National Statistics (England and Wales).

F) **Warning — do not suddenly stop taking these drugs. Always consult your doctor.**

WHAT THEY SAY

A) “Following an extensive review of all available data, the committee concluded that on the present available evidence the true addiction potential of benzodiazepines was low. The number dependent on the benzodiazepines in the UK from 1960 to 1977 has been estimated to be 28 persons.

“It further suggested patients receiving benzodiazepine therapy be carefully selected and monitored and that prescriptions be limited to short-term use.”

Source: Committee on the Review of Medicines (BMJ, March, 1980).

B) “There is still a significant problem with benzodiazepines. We would have liked it to have been solved 20 years ago.”

Source: Mr. Jim Kennedy, Spokesman for the Royal College of General Practitioners, Sunday Express, May 13, 2001.

C) **“It is my belief that a socially-responsible Labour Government must act now and move to reclassify benzodiazepine drugs to an ‘A’ classification.”**

Source: Mr. Phil Woolas, MP, Oldham Evening Chronicle, August 1, 2001.

D) “The problem is that, because benzos are prescribed drugs, they are not included in the Government’s drugs strategy and there are no widespread treatment programmes.

“Many people are being prescribed the drugs for longer than three weeks and the physical symptoms makes staying on them the lesser of two evils.”

Source: Mr. Phil Woolas, MP, Oldham Evening Chronicle, April 7, 2003.

E) **“The ‘Beat the Benzos’ campaign is a gift to the country and we keep chipping away. These drugs are responsible for more pain, unhappiness and damage than anything else in our society.”**

Source: Mr. Phil Woolas, MP, Oldham Evening Chronicle, February 12, 2004.

F) “Only the tip of the iceberg has been uncovered. The over-prescription of these drugs has caused enormous damage to people. I hope the Health Select Committee will point the finger at those responsible and point the way forward.”

Source: Mr. Phil Woolas, MP, Oldham Evening Chronicle, June 16, 2004.

YOU CAN HELP (Oldham People)

A meeting is to be held on March 5, 2007, between Kevin Barron, MP (chairman of the Health Select Committee), Jim Dobbin, MP, and John Grogan, MP (chairman and secretary of the all-party group on tranquillisers addiction), who are requesting a full Health Select Committee enquiry into these highly addictive and toxic drugs.

Support the enquiry by cutting out this advertisement and sending it to Kevin Barron, MP, House of Commons, Westminster, London SW1A 0AA.

WHERE TO GET HELP

Oldham Tranx, Rock Street Centre
Telephone 0161 770 8500
www.benzo.org.uk

‘Beat the Benzos’
There will be future adverts on this issue