

Submission for the Inquiry into Rural Health Services in Tasmania

Bio-psychiatry in Rural and Remote Areas

This submission relates to the health outcomes for people with social and emotional issues who are living in rural and remote areas of Tasmania.

It is asserted that using psychiatric drugs to treat social and emotional issues/disturbances will not resolve underlying issues in a person's life. This submission would therefore like to raise concerns about psychiatrists who convince their patients that they have a mental illness that requires a chemical treatment, requiring the person to take the medication for life. This need for psychiatric medication is often justified by a comparison with the provision of insulin to treat patients with diabetes or medication for someone with heart disease.

Grace E. Jackson (2009) said, "The philosophy of care which begins by interpreting existential problems, odd actions or disturbing thoughts as the essential by-product of brain disease; it ends by promoting or coercing the use of drugs, magnets, surgery, and electroshock".

As the drugs suppress overall brain function, people are harmed by the treatment used (Iatrogenesis). Emotions are muted, impacting a person's responses and reactions, including the ability to bond with a child. Other side effects include cognitive and memory impairment. In addition, memory impairment from electroshock (ECT) and near-death experience (NDE) can follow. However, risk factors such as Tardive Dyskenesia and Tardive Dementia are rarely considered.

Joanna Moncrieff (2009) said, "By suggesting that drugs reverse an underlying problem, the disease-centred model conceals the limitations of drugs and the damage they can do, which is likely to be magnified many times in children with their developing brains and personalities". It is impossible to take responsibility for one's own growth and development whilst in the zombie state induced by psychiatric medication – patients are disempowered and can feel worthless.

It is therefore urged that there needs to be an evaluation of current psychiatric practice, involving retraining of psychiatric professionals, specifically in relation to the use of medication in the treatment of Tasmanians with social and emotional issues.