

## BLAMING THE BRAIN

### The 'Chemical Imbalance' Fraud

*"There's no biological imbalance. When people come to me and they say, 'I have a biological imbalance,' I say, 'Show me your lab tests.' There are no lab tests. So what's the biochemical imbalance?" —Dr. Ron Leifer, New York psychiatrist.*

The cornerstone of psychiatry's disease model today is the theory that a brain-based, chemical imbalance causes mental illness. However, Dr. Mark Graff, Chair of Public Affairs of the American Psychiatric Association said that this theory was "probably drug industry derived."<sup>1</sup> His cohort, Dr. Steven Sharfstein, APA president, was forced under media pressure to admit that there is "no clean cut lab test" to determine a chemical imbalance in the brain.<sup>2</sup>

Jonathan Leo, associate professor of anatomy at Western University of Health Sciences says, "If a psychiatrist says you have a shortage of a chemical, ask for a blood test and watch the psychiatrist's reaction. The number of people who believe that scientists have proven that depressed people have low serotonin is a glorious testament to the power of marketing."<sup>3</sup>

Despite the billions of pharmaceutical company funding in support of the chemical imbalance theory, this psychiatric "disease" model is thoroughly debunked.

Diabetes *is* a biochemical imbalance. However, "the definitive test and biochemical imbalance is a high blood sugar balance level. Treatment in severe cases is insulin injections, which restore sugar balance. The symptoms clear and retest shows the blood sugar is normal," said Joseph Glenmullen of Harvard Medical School. "Nothing like a sodium imbalance or blood sugar imbalance exists for depression or any other psychiatric syndrome."

- Edward Drummond, M.D., Associate Medical Director at Seacoast Mental Health Center in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, informs us: "First, no biological etiology [cause] has been proven for any psychiatric disorder...in spite of decades of research....So don't accept the myth that we can make an 'accurate diagnosis'....Neither should you believe that your problems are due solely to a 'chemical imbalance.'"<sup>4</sup>
- Psychologist Bruce Levine, Ph.D., concurs: "Remember that no biochemical, neurological, or genetic markers have been found for attention deficit disorder,

oppositional defiant disorder, depression, schizophrenia, anxiety, compulsive alcohol and drug abuse, overeating, gambling, or any other so-called mental illness, disease, or disorder.”<sup>5</sup>

- Charles E. Dean, M.D., says that people are “convinced that the origins of mental illnesses are to be found in biology, when, despite more than three decades of research, there still is no proof...The absences of any well-defined physical causation is reflected in the absence of any laboratory tests for psychiatric diagnoses—much in contrast to diabetes and many other physical disorders.
- “[T]here are no tests available for assessing the chemical status of a living person’s brain.” – Elliot Valenstein, Ph.D.<sup>6</sup>
- Psychiatrist David Kaiser adds this: “Patients [have] been diagnosed with ‘chemical imbalances’ despite the fact that no test exists to support such a claim, and...there is no real conception of what a correct chemical balance would look like.”<sup>7</sup>
- “Biopsychiatrists have created the myth that psychiatric ‘wonder’ drugs correct chemical imbalances. Yet there is *no basis for this model because no chemical imbalance has ever been proven to be the basis of a mental illness,*” wrote Ty C. Colbert, a clinical psychologist.

The whole theory was invented to push drugs. “The way to sell drugs is to sell psychiatric illness,” says Carl Elliot, a bioethicist, University of Minnesota.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Interview of Dr. Mark Graff on *CBS Studio 2*, July 2005.

<sup>2</sup> “All Fired Up,” *People* magazine, 11 July 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Kelly Patricia O’Meara, *Psyched Out: How Psychiatry Sells Mental Illness and Pushes Pills That Kill* (Author House, 2006), pp. 47-48, citing Jonathan Leo paper, “The Biology of Mental Illness,” 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Edward Drummond, M.D., *The Complete Guide to Psychiatric Drugs* (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 2000), pp. 15-16.

<sup>5</sup> Bruce D. Levine, Ph.D., *Commonsense Rebellion: Debunking Psychiatry, Confronting Society*, (Continuum, New York, 2001), p. 277.

<sup>6</sup> Elliot S. Valenstein, Ph.D., *Blaming the Brain*, (The Free Press, New York, 1998), p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> David Kaiser, M.D., “Commentary: Against Biologic Psychiatry,” *Psychiatric Times*, Dec. 1996.

<sup>8</sup> Shankar Vedantam, “Drug Ads Hying Anxiety Make Some Uneasy,” *The Washington Post*, 16 July 2001.