

Head To Head Maudsley Debate

Does long term use of psychiatric drugs cause more harm than good?

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In the paper version of BMJ on 6 June, I replied to David Tovey, Cochrane's Editor in Chief, and Rachel Churchill, Clive Adams and Geraldine Macdonald (Cochrane editors responsible for Cochrane Groups specialising in mental health topics) that journalists and others had interpreted their rapid response (1) to my Maudsley debate paper (2) as an attempt at protecting psychiatry's guild interests, and that some had even suspected that they tried to protect the drug industry (3).

As I did not intend to question my four Cochrane colleagues' integrity, I withdraw this statement to avoid any misunderstandings and I apologize for any hurt and confusion caused. The fact is that all of us in Cochrane do our best to keep industry influence out of our work, which we regard as essential for the trustworthiness of our reviews.

I had two main messages in my BMJ paper about the Maudsley debate, which are my personal views after having gone through the science: psychiatric drugs are the third leading cause of death; and we would have a healthier and more long-lived population if we only used 2% of the drugs we currently use. Tovey et al. felt I went too far with this recommendation. I believe that my impending book (4) will fully justify my assertions.

1 Tovey D, Churchill R, Adams CE, et al. Recommendations in debate are insufficiently justified. BMJ 2015;350:h2952.

2 Gøtzsche PC. Does long term use of psychiatric drugs cause more harm than good? BMJ 2015;349:h2435.

3 Gøtzsche PC. Author's reply. BMJ 2015;350:h2955.

4 Gøtzsche PC. Deadly psychiatry and organised denial. Copenhagen: People's Press; 2015 (in press).

Competing interests: No competing interests

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Peter C Gøtzsche

Professor

Nordic Cochrane Centre, Rigshospitalet, Copenhagen