



Behavior Modification: Medications Can Change Who We Are

What is the cumulative societal effect of drug saturation by Big Pharma? It's big part of why our nation is dysfunctional: Statins, anti-depressants, asthma drugs, vaccines, ad infinitum. Big Pharma blatantly refuses to take any responsibility. □ TN Editor

"Patient Five" was in his late 50s when a trip to the doctors changed his life.

He had diabetes, and he had signed up for a study to see if taking a "statin" - a kind of cholesterol-lowering drug - might help. So far, so normal.

But soon after he began the treatment, his wife began to notice a sinister transformation. A previously reasonable man, he became explosively angry and - out of nowhere - developed a tendency for road rage. During one memorable episode, he warned his family to keep away, lest he put

them in hospital.

Out of fear of what might happen, Patient Five stopped driving. Even as a passenger, his outbursts often forced his wife to abandon their journeys and turn back. Afterwards, she'd leave him alone to watch TV and calm down. She became increasingly fearful for her own safety.

Then one day, Patient Five had an epiphany. "He was like, 'Wow, it really seems that these problems started when I enrolled in this study'," says Beatrice Golomb, who leads a research group at the University of California, San Diego.

Alarmed, the couple turned to the study's organisers. "They were very hostile. They said that the two couldn't possibly be related, that he needed to keep taking the medication, and that he should stay in the study," says Golomb.

Ironically, by this point the patient was so cantankerous that he flatly ignored the doctors' advice. "He swore roundly, stormed out of the office and stopped taking the drug immediately," she says. Two weeks later, he had his personality back.

Others have not been so lucky. Over the years, Golomb has [collected reports from patients](#) across the United States - tales of broken marriages, destroyed careers, and a surprising number of men who have come unnervingly close to murdering their wives. In almost every case, the symptoms began when they started taking statins, then promptly returned to normal when they stopped; one man [repeated this cycle five times](#) before he realised what was going on.

Antidepressants may not just lighten moods, they may also reduce expressions of neuroticism, research suggests (Credit: Getty Images)

According to Golomb, this is typical - in her experience, most patients struggle to recognise their own behavioural changes, let alone connect them to their medication. In some instances, the realisation comes too late: the researcher was contacted by the families of a number of people, including an internationally renowned scientist and a former editor of a legal publication, who [took their own lives](#).

We're all familiar with the mind-bending properties of psychedelic drugs - but it turns out ordinary medications can be just as potent. From paracetamol (known as acetaminophen in the US) to antihistamines, statins, asthma medications and antidepressants, there's emerging evidence that they can make us impulsive, angry, or restless, diminish our empathy for strangers, and even manipulate fundamental aspects of our personalities, such as how neurotic we are.

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