

COMMITTEE FOR TRUTH IN PSYCHIATRY

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P.O. Box 1214, New York, NY 10003

January 8, 2009

To: Food and Drug Administration
Docket Management Branch (HFA-305)
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

Re: Docket #FDA 2009-N-0392, Electroconvulsive Therapy Device

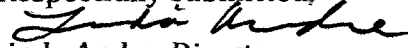
To the FDA:

Supplementing my previous submission, I enclose information previously unavailable to you regarding the permanent adverse cognitive effects of the ECT (electroconvulsive therapy) device. This information is relevant to the question before you, which is whether ECT has been sufficiently researched and proven safe, or whether further scientific investigation, including clinical safety trials, is needed.

These are reports from people who had ECT in recent years and experienced permanent deficits in memory ability and other cognitive abilities (known as anterograde amnesia). They were forwarded to me after being sent to Dr. Harold Sackeim of New York State Psychiatric Institute, the nation's most prominent ECT researcher and, for the last 25 years, the principal investigator of an ongoing NIMH grant to study ECT's cognitive effects. Dr. Sackeim had claimed that he had never seen a case of permanent anterograde amnesia and publicly offered to evaluate former patients who had experienced it. As documented in my book, Doctors of Deception: What They Don't Want You to Know About Shock Treatment (Rutgers University Press), at least 175 such patients contacted Dr. Sackeim, consistently reporting the same serious adverse effects. Dr. Sackeim later testified that he had thrown away all communications from these patients and did not conduct any evaluations. How are the adverse cognitive effects of ECT ever to be fully investigated when the principal investigator of an NIMH grant on this topic refuses to investigate even after publicly pledging to do so? There must be a full clinical trial, using controls, relevant instruments and adequate followup time, of ECT's permanent effects on memory and nonmemory cognitive abilities.

The ECT device must be maintained in Class III and the manufacturers must be required to submit PreMarket Approval applications.

Respectfully submitted,


Linda Andre, Director

FDA-2009-N-0392

SUP

I am 29 years old and live in Miami. In 2000 I had ECT treatments done 12 times. In March I had 7 treatments and in June I had 5 more. In March, after having the 5 treatments....I had two seizures, while out of the country. In July, I again had a seizure. Before having ECT, I had never experienced this problem. Also, I have had trouble with my memory since having ECT. I cannot remember things that happend between about 1 1/2 years before the ECT and about 6 months afterwards. After having the ECT treatments....I had a lot of trouble retaining new information...or remembering how to get to the store around the corner. I also had trouble with my speech. I would have trouble finding words...and I would stutter a lot. While most of the problems have resolved, I feel like there have been some negative effects that are permanent which I will just have to live with. I am a nurse, and working now.....currently taking medications to control the depression. I would like to help out with any research on this subject. Also, I would like to receive any information you might have. Thank you.

Dear Dr. Sackheim,

I am a Bipolar II patient of Dr Gregory Sullivan at Wellspan Behavioral Health in York Pa.

I have had dozens of ECT treatments, to stem episodes of major depression, and for "maintenance" afterward to prevent relapse.

I also cannot remember major periods of time in my life, get lost in my home town of 44 years, cannot concentrate, have short term memory problems, and probably will never be able to work again, not because of being Bipolar, but from the destructive effects of my "neccesary" ECT treatments.

I understand that you are looking for people for a study to assess this type of damage due to ECT. I would appreciate being included.

Dear Sir:

I believe I have permanent memory and cognitive damage from 15-20 ECT treatments over a course of 3 years. If you would like for me to participate in an ECT evaluation, you may contact me by e-mail or at the address below.

I did have ect treatments 14yrs ago and I do suffer from short term memory loss as well as big gaps in my long term memory. The doctors told me that I would either get my memory back in a short time or I would never remember events leading up to the ect well he said nothing about it affecting my short term memory, its been such a struggle I have felt like a zombie the last 14 years since the procedure I feel like it has given me brain damage and I can't even hold a job because of my memory and I can't take much stress either. ECT did save my life because without it I wouldn't be here today but I have long term effects from it, I would really like to be included in your study.

Dear Dr. Sackeim:

I have come across an article (<http://www.ect.org/effects/eval.html>) describing your May 18 invitation to evaluate anyone in the country who has had brain damage from ECT.

In addition to a subjective sense of a damaged ability to form new memories (since I never had testing prior to ECT I don't know how you'd ever evaluate this), I have had permanent long-term memory loss. I have lost most "event" memory over my entire life. That is I remember skills, people, facts, etc., but have little to no memory of events that have taken place in my life. Childhood activities, marriage, the birth of my children, raising them and seeing them graduate and get married, family functions and reunions, trips and vacations — all seem to be permanently gone (it's been! about two years since my ECT). I spent an entire month with my three sisters, caring for my mother while she died of cancer. I have zero memories of this time.

Again, not having had prior to ECT testing, I don't know what kind of testing you could offer to document this finding. However, I am interested in hearing what you have to say. The article suggest that you don't believe ECT causes brain damage, so I'm not sure why you'd want to interview me. If you found a way to document the brain damage I have, you'd have to retract your statements. The vast majority of other ECT patients I've talked to (dozens - my doctor is head of ECT at a Baltimore hospital) complain of some level of permanent memory damage - a few as severe as mine. If all of her patients have memory loss, either she's doing something terribly wrong - or you are.

The bottom! line is - if ECT does not cause brain damage, why can't I remember my life? I'm not currently depressed, I'm not currently on any medication and my memory has been gone since sometime during ECT treatment. Does an adequate evaluation of memory loss secondary to ECT actually exist? If you can convince me that you are capable of providing an evaluation that actually measures something, I will be happy to accept your invitation and provide you with an interview.

Dear Dr. Sackeim:

I am absolutely certain that I suffer from permanent memory loss caused from the ECT treatment that I have been having. I can say without a doubt that it has had an effect on my cognition, and this is causing me a tremendous amount of distress. I was only told that the ECT would have a temporary effect on my memory. I have since discontinued my ECT treatment 2 weeks ago because it was not doing enough for my depression to put up with the cognition problems it is causing me. Now, 2 weeks later, my memory loss is no better, and it is a terrible feeling.

So, I am responding to your request to evaluate people who have had adverse cognitive effects and memory loss because definitely me!!!

Please e mail me with more information about getting an evaluation.

To whom it may concern:

I am a survivor of ECT treatments. I had them for 6 1/2 years, every 3 weeks for most of that time. (At times I had them every week, every 2 weeks, and every 4 weeks.) The treatments were the bilateral type.

I still have major chunks of my memory missing, and I still struggle with the same issues that ECT was supposed to help. I was in the upper 90% of IQ level, but I rather doubt that I am now.

If there are ways to get my memory back, I would like to try them. At the same time as I was getting the ECT, I was on as many as 20 psychotropic drugs at a time, ranging from anti-depressants, tranquilizers, sedatives, sleeping medication, lithium, anti-psychotics, etc.

When I was given the ECT treatments, I had no idea what they were doing or what the potential side-effects would be. I didn't even know why they were doing it. I still do not understand at all as to what happens to the body during ECT, but I am starting to have flashbacks of the experiences.

I noted with interest the notation in WWW.ect.org site that there is interest in patients with cognitive losses which are post ECT. I have severe memory impairment, my doctor seems to minimize this.. I worry about it, it has caused psychological distress, embarrassment, and difficulties in my work as a clinical social worker. I have delayed making any inquiries until watching recent television program ..I believe on discovery channel...regarding ECT. In addition, I have at times felt I was the only one who has the permanent loss of memory...esp. long term...was embarrassed to discuss it. In any event, is there a study?? Are there resources to discuss/theorize the issue via your group..or with resources of your grant??

Thank You.

Dr. Sackeim:

I believe you have been on record for making the following statement:

"I invite anyone in the country who believes ECT's had a deleterious effect on their cognition to come to us for an evaluation."

I received a series of nine shock treatments in 1996 in McAllen, Texas, and I have significant chunks of memory loss associated with that therapy (which, by the way, seemed to have little effect on my depression). Years later, those chunks of my life are still missing, and I feel my memory seems not to be what it once was. I would like to determine if the treatments I received in Texas are responsible.

I am a 39 year old English teacher who still has problems with depression and SAD, most symptoms of which are successfully treated with Celexa and Imipramine, along with periodic counselling sessions. I don't have any money to speak of for travel or medical expenses, but I would really like to find out more about the effect these treatments have had upon me. If you are unable to arrange an evaluation yourself, I would very much appreciate your suggestion(s) in this respect.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mr.. Sir

I had ect treatment about 8 years ago and I don't have even close to the memory ability I had before.

So lets get me out there so you can check me out and fix my memory.

I received many ECT treatments. I was asked to sign permission for treatment when I was not mentally capable of making such a decision. I have lost most of my past. I have lost so much more than my past. I don't remember most of my children growing up. I don't remember even the house I was living in. I don't remember most of my childhood. I didn't remember my friends, and I was too ashamed to tell them I didn't really know them. So gradually, the friends gave up on me. I am still battling just as much with depression and suicidal thoughts. I didn't remember where I worked or even how to do my job. I can't argue with people's perception of the past because I have very little of my memory to have any basis. And I don't know now what I remember, or if it is what someone has told me. I had not battled with depression long enough to even see if therapy or medication would be successful. I am trying to put my life back together, but there is always that uncertainty of my knowledge and ability since it seems all new to me.

I'm not sure if this is what I need to do, but I am a victim of ECT. I had 6 Bipolar treatments in 1998 or 99? At the VA center in Long Beach, CA. I then received 6 treatments from St. Josephs Hospital in Orange, CA in 1999. These were supposed to be better because they were Unilateral treatments.

I have experienced loss of short term memory that is so bad I feel like I have Alzheimers disease. I have long term holes too. Like Birthdays, and other important information about my life and myself. I cannot function as normal person anymore because I can't remember anything.

MY LIFE IS RUINED

I understand that you are disputing the claim that ECT has had detrimental effects on patients. I am a fairly articulate person who was depressed several years ago and thought that ECT was the answer as described by my doctors.

After having 160 treatments over a period of 19 months, my memory was definitely affected. The ECT stopped in 1996 and my memory effectiveness has continued to decrease significantly since that time....More than just a middle aged lady aging, I might add.

I have since had a heart attack and suffer from some mild forms of anxiety. I am a professional women who has had to give up her own corporation of 20 years to work for much less part-time in tasks that are not so demanding that my memory loss would be noticeable to my clients. It is very disappointing to me to not be the woman I was capable of being as a result of the effects of this treatment,

I challenge you to dispute the facts of my case and maintain that there are no long term ill effects of the treatment.

Dear Dr. Sackheim,

Since you said:

"I invite anyone in the country who believes ECT's had a deleterious effect on their cognition to come to us for an evaluation."

I would like to volunteer to be a part of your study.

I believe I experience not only memory but cognitive affects from having ECT. I believe these changes are permanent, but since I am not dead yet, it may be a little hard to prove.

Please contact me and inform me as to how I might participate. I admire your open-mindedness to be willing to study those of us who have had serious problems whom practitioners of ECT would like to ignore or forget. I think it is at least equally important to document the adverse impacts of a medical procedure as the potentially positive ones. I hope you are open minded enough to be able to do that, too, in spite of your views as an advocate.

Thanks for your consideration.

Harold Sackeim,

I am responding to your request to evaluate people who have experienced adverse cognitive effects from both ECTs and M-ECTs. I have had several series of ECTs and am presently on M-ECTs. From my initial treatment, I am unable to remember the time frame of September 2002 to July 2003. I also find it very difficult to remember individual's names, street names, city names, and driving directions. At times I am at a loss for the correct vocabulary term for sentence usage. In addition to these adverse cognitive effects, I find myself forgetting what I just said to an individual. I am interested in taking you up on your offer of setting up an appointment for an evaluation. I thank you for your time and I do look forward in hearing from you.

I have had ec's (total of 30). The last one was in 1997. Within a week I began having severe intractable headaches. I could not function. These headaches were daily and still remain so. Some days are not as bad as others but it has had a severe effect on my life. I originally went to the doctor for the headaches and they did a CT and MRI which showed nothing, so I was started on Lortab. This continued daily for the next few years before hitting bottom and realizing that I was addicted to the pain meds. I had to go through rehab for the addiction then. I still have severe headaches, but now cannot receive anything for pain because now I am an "addict". So I get to just suffer. We are trying xylocaine triggerpoint injections but they are not working well.

Now the other problem of course is the memory loss. I was led to believe that it would be short term, but it has only gotten progressively worse with time. I honestly do not believe that I could live on my own. I am dangerous at times. I really wonder if it could be the starting of alzheimers disease. I really am not ok. Most of the time the memory loss is just embarrassing, but others when I leave the eye on on the stove or something like that it is not ok. My husband has had to take over paying the bills. I would love to know if anything could be done to reverse the damage that has been done or at least keep it from getting worse. My quality of life isn't really worth it anymore.

I wanted to let you know that between April-December 2000 I had a series of 21 ECT treatments. I have lost much of my memory for the 1990's. If you contact me I would be happy to share my experiences with you.

1/21/02

Greetings, Dr. Sackeim,

I am writing to formally request the ECT evaluation that you offered in testimony during public hearings before the New York State Assembly on Friday, May 18th. It is my understanding from testimony submitted at those hearings that you are the recipient of 20 years of exclusive government grant funding that has paid for your extensive research of the adverse effects of ECT. I am a mental health consumer who received a series of ECT treatments in June of 2008, and as such am a candidate to participate in your study. I am following up with a certified letter stating my request mailed to your office and am enclosing my contact information both here and in my written request. I am enclosing your quoted invitation from that hearing, and await your response to my request.

Subject: adverse memory effects from ECT

I read that you are studying the adverse memory effects of ECT treatments. I am a survivor of 18 ECT treatments from the spring of last year and continue to have memory/thought difficulties. If you are still interested in studying survivors, please feel free to contact me.

Dear Dr Sackheim

I was just reading a link on ECT.org where you said at a conference that you would like to evaluate anyone who has had (supposed) deleterious effects on memory due to ECT. I offer myself to you for evaluation. I have chunks of memory loss over all facets of my life history, and also problems with remembering/categorizing new information. It has almost been a year since my last ECT treatment. I can state without reservation that ECT has saved my life several times.

I am very interested to learn if I am "the only one" or if there are others like me. I would like to help you in your study.

Thanks for your time...

Hello. I understand that you evaluate patients who have received ect treatments especially with regard to perceived permanent side effects. I received shock treatments in April 2005 and my memory and cognition have not seemed the same since. Perhaps there are other factors but I always trace it back to the ECT's. The funny thing is that I don't necessarily regret the treatments and the current side effects don't bother me psychologically although they have impaired my professional life which has pretty much derailed.

I would like to be involved in any comprehensive study if possible.

Thank you.

I had , I am told, 12 ECT treatments this past August, and I am responding to your request to evaluate people who experienced adverse cognitive effects. I am asking for an appointment for an evaluation.

I am a 58 year old woman who finds it difficult to remember how to tie my shoes, let alone do any cognitive venture, ie: a balancing of a check book; I requiring several trips back in to the house for purse, sunglasses, keys, etc. to go anywhere; I get lost every trip to and from my therapist that I have been seeing weekly, and more of the same brain functioning loss.

I await your reply for my evaluation and all it entails.

Dear Dr.Sackeim,

I had ECT and I am requesting to be evaluated for your study. I live in Massachusetts but I am very will to travel to your office. I have no— none— of my memory during my ECT treatments. I am willing to get the doctors records or whatever you need. I am pleading with you, i would like to understand what exactly happen to my brain. On top of that the doctor who did the treatments told me my memory wouldnt be effected. I am very upset with losing that year of my life. I had 3 treatments a week for almost 4 months then down to two and he wanted to continue to do treatments for another year at 1 to 4 ECT treatments per month. Please let me help you in your study.

I am someone who has received eighty ECT treatments in Dallas Texas. I would like to come for an evaluation about my memory loss. I believe I have severe memory loss from ECT treatments. I also believe that it was not expressed to me how severe the memory loss could be. I understand you receive a lot of money from the government to research ECT and I would like to be evaluated.

7/26/2006

Dear Dr Sackeim:

I recently learned of your study on the memory effects of ECT, and I would like to participate, if you are still seeking study subjects.

Over the past 14 months or so, I have received over 40 ECTs, and have had memory loss which has interfered with my ability to return to work, among other things. My memory has definitely improved over time, but the deficits continue to effect my daily life.

I'm interested to learn more about your study.

Dear Dr. Harold Sackeim, I am responding to your request for people who have had adverse cognitive effects from ECT so you can evaluate them. I've had permanent memory loss from the ECT treatment I received and it is having a very negative on all aspects of my life including social and career. I am a 40 yr old female who has had ALOT of treatments with ECT over the last 3 yrs (including maintenance treatments every 1-2 weeks after my original series for psychotic depression. Here is a little background about me. I graduated Pharmacy School when I was 25 Magna Cum Laude and worked as a Registered Pharmacist after that until about 9 years ago when at that point I went on Social Security Disability and am presently still on it. My memory is so fried that I can not remember the simplest pharmaceutical facts including the names of popular medication that in the past I could have rattled off in my sleep. What is even worse is that I cannot remember the names of past friends and people I meet now are almost impossible to remember when, where and what I know them from- especially what they look like. My other biggest problem is directions driving. I cannot remember now to get to a place a week later even if it is only 5 miles away and places further away don't have a chance at all of being remembered so I drive with a map of the town I live in in my car. Phone numbers are another impossibility. Dates of appointments or special events are written on huge pieces of paper then taped EVERYWHERE in my house. My old memory was so good that people used to tease me about how smart I was and how impossible it was to pull something over on me where now its hard to believe I graduated high school. The ECT's saved my life in one aspect by eliminating my psychotic depression but in others it killed it. It is quite frightening. If you have any questions or would like to talk to me please feel free to call me at the following address: Michelle Kraft 333 E. 1st St. Suite 100
St. Paul, MN 55101

ABSOLUTELY, ECT is brain damaging. Almost three years ago, I had three months of ECT three times a weeks, one month twice a week and then one month once a week. I am not the same person. Depression was relieved for a brief period, only to return worse than ever, and I believe I have lost a point or two from my IQ. Insignificant events in my life as well as major ones have been erased from my memory, both short and long term. There is no pattern. Tasks I used to do by rote (preparing a favorite recipe for example) I cannot do. I am always searching for the correct word to express myself, as it seems my vocabulary and reading skills are now below what they were when I graduated from high school. I am easily confused and struggle to concentrate on all but the simplest problem solving. And the sorriest part of all this is that I used to be a very detail-oriented person, very well equipped to handle clerical duties that involved patience, concentration, and attention to detail. Even this letter, however well it may appear to read, was difficult and time-consuming to compose. ECT should be banned!!! It is as dangerous as lobotomy. If there is a class action lawsuit going on anywhere concerning this procedure, I sure would love to know about it.

Dear DR Sackeim:

I am responding to your request for research subjects who have experienced adverse effects from ECT. I certainly did.

I received ECT in 1972, at the insistence of my parents' recommended psychiatrist. I had complained of symptoms of depression, and was given 10 sessions of ECT. The medications I had been prescribed were contraindicated for depression, and none of the available tricyclic antidepressants were tried with me before the ECT decision was reached. I was not informed of the potential adverse effects of ECT.

Following my ECT sessions, there were two significant adverse effects. First, there was and still is a complete memory blackout of the three month period prior to my receiving ECT. When I returned to college, people who had become acquainted with me during the previous three months would say hello, and call me by name. I had no recollection of ever meeting them, and still do not.

The second adverse effect was a 15% reduction in measurable IQ. This measurement came from standardized tests taken before and after ECT.

I am certainly glad the psychiatrist decided that I was "cured" after only ten sessions. In truth, I had sufficient wits remaining to be able to deceive the doctor about my recovery from depression. My chronic dysthymia was later cured by several years of being prescribed Prozac. I am sure that I would have benefited from the tricyclics available in 1972, rather than ECT.

I look forward to being objectively tested and interviewed by you soon.

Hi, my name is Amanda I have received several ECT test for depression from DR. Donnie Joe Holden in Springdale Arkansas the decision to take the test were b/c I felt I had tried every anti-depressant out there and none were successful I have a lot of memory loss things that my Husband tells me we have done together like movies we have seen, places we ate and things I use to cook I have no recollection of any of these things I have also noticed that my personality is gone I feel nothing it has been hard to feel moved I have a hard time identifying with my feelings I am definitely a lot slower my husband believes that it did a lot of memory damage and it upsets him that I can't remember things I feel stupid now I have trouble concentrating and don't feel like getting out to do things much I work a full time job and also have a 3yr that has taken up most of my time I have also went back on meds Effexor 150*75 and Seroquel 25*1/2 2 times during the day my reason for this is b/c I was irritable and have a lot of past trauma that includes abuse drug, alcohol, sexual, physical, psychological they gave me Effexor for depression and Seroquel for flash backs and nightmares these things happened years ago more than 6 years ago it has been hard I even thought that ECT could help me forget those things but instead I forgot previous life issues I feel like a lost person nowing what I want to do and say but unable to control my mind from doing the opposite I definitely don't think before I act the ECT made it much worse if there is hope out there I need it my family isn't rich so my therapy has been limited to deal with past issues so please if you can help me regain me back or just help me remember who that is? thank you, Amanda

P.S. I also need to let you know that it happens at work I am a receptionist so it is important that I remember things when I answer the phone some times if I don't write it down I forget it right away I forget names and I am only 27 years old there is got to be hope!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Dr. Sackheim:

I am responding to your public offer to examine and evaluate survivors of ECT who have suffered long-term memory and cognitive damage.

I received ECT at Bethesda naval hospital in 1996, and I have devastating damage from it. This damage has not improved in the intervening years; in fact, it has worsened in some areas.

Please give me an appointment for the evaluation you have publicly offered.

Dear Harold Sackeim,

You stated at the New York State Assembly public hearings on electroshock on 5/18 that in your 20 years of practice, you had never seen even one case of permanent effect on memory function from ECT.

I would like to request an appointment for an evaluation since I do have this condition as a result of ECT. I have CAT Scan and MRI and a complete set of my psychiatric records to assist you in your evaluation.

I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.

I have information that you would like to study those who have gone through ECTs and have lasting memory losses due to the ECT. Well, I am a person who is nearly 2 months s/p and am offering myself for study. I very much would like to know what has happened to me and if it is something that will be permanent.

Thank you.

I was treated for depression using ECT (bilateral) in the summer of 1995 after medication and counseling were unsuccessful.

The ECT treatment was, in my opinion, very successful in treating the depression in that it arrested the depressive downward cycle, and thus allowed for the conventional treatment (SSRIs and cognitive therapy) to bring me to a functional state. I will also state that I have found few individuals who experienced physiological symptoms which were as severe as mine.

HOWEVER, I was informed of SHORT-TERM memory loss, but there was no information provided to me that I would suffer long-term memory loss. In addition, there was no information provided that stated that the ECT could impair my future ability to remember. Another, related but more disturbing issue is that the ECT has affected my overall cognitive ability.

I am a Ph.D. biomedical engineer, emphasis on electrical medical devices. Although I have been able to perform my job duties, I am unable to make a job move back into active R&D (e.g. academic research) due to my current mental state.

I am on a maintenance dosage of SSRIs to prevent any future depressive events. I have not experienced any notable depressive thoughts, etc. for more than 6 years.

Although I currently live in the Bay Area, I am extremely interested in finding out how ECT has caused my condition, possible modifications to existing ECT protocols, and possible treatment paths which can help recover/heal the damage the ECT caused.

I am aware that you do not believe that ECT can cause these affects; however, I can assure you as a fellow scientist that they are real. In fact, since my area of expertise is electronics, I have a bias TOWARDS electrical stimulation for treatment of certain conditions. I REALLY wish that my memory, etc. has not been affected, but it has.

I look forward to your response, and info/interaction you may offer would be highly valued.

Dear Doctor Harold Sackeim:

I am a Registered Nurse and had 6-8 ECT treatments for an episode of depression in 2002. I would like to be evaluated for your Post-ECT brain follow-up. I have had State Aptitude/IQ/Psychological tests, brain MRIs labs, etc. I am now disabled and unable to practice -- although maintain active licensure. I want to rehabilitate and work again!

I have an interesting case: Since 2002 I have been diagnosed with lowered IQ, memory impairment, dural granulomas and much, much more! I am under the care of four MDs/Specialists.

Please let me know how to get paperwork/appointment from/with you to link my current condition to ECT treatments/trauma, or you can prove NOT. I would be very grateful for your input and recommendations.

To Whom It May Concern,

I am an "ECT Survivor"...if you want to call it that. Sometimes I believe that I, in many ways, have NOT survived ECT treatment.

I suffer with depression and anxiety, and am on medications to help me with this. I received ECT treatment approx. 2 years ago, and my memory (and life) has not been the same since. I routinely forget things/events, and the worst part is I can no longer secure unemployment. I am trying VERY hard to get my life back on track, and this includes finding work!

I've applied for dozens of positions, some where I actually land an interview. THE PROBLEM IS, WHEN I AM ASKED AN INTERVIEW QUESTION, I BEGIN TO ANSWER...AND THEN ...I LOSE MY "WORDS"!? It seems that I cannot "articulate" the way I use to. I NEVER had this problem before ECT's, and had little problem in finding work. Now, I just look like an "idiot" in an interview. The word(s) "just go"!!

In addition, spelling has become a problem (where it never was) (I now use a dictionary and a thesaurus regularly) and I still have some problems visualizing directions (at first, I couldn't remember how to get from my house, to the local grocery store).

I firmly believe, that due to my problem in articulating during conversation or explanation, I LOSE OUT IN PERSONAL INTERVIEWS, THUS UNABLE TO SECURE EMPLOYMENT. I am sincere, and honest in relaying this to you, and am NOT looking for a reason why I cannot secure a job! I SWEAR!!

If you would like to discuss my ECT treatments, or the after affects, feel free to reply to this e-mail

Dr. Sackeim,

I was recently informed that you had never seen a case of permanently impaired memory from ECT. I was also told that you invited anyone who has had this happen to be evaluated by you. I am requesting this. I was a registered nurse working in a hospital for 27 years before having ECT's. I now have a permanent long term memory loss which has taken my professional knowledge and also all memory of my marriage, the birth of my 3 children, their childhood, extensive travel in this country, etc. I also have problems with short term memory and difficulty with concentration.

I look forward to your reply.

December 26, 2001

Dr. Sackeim
Dept Of Biological Psychiatry,
New York State Psychiatric Institute,
1051 Riverside Drive New York, N.Y. 10032.

Dear Dr. Sackeim:

I understand that you hold the only grant to study "cognitive effects of ECT", and want to evaluate anyone with permanent cognitive damage from ECT. 40 years ago I was given ECT, and it has left me with a part of my brain that is lost to me. I am a writer, and not being able to access information that was supposed to be stored in my brain is devastating. I would be very happy for you to evaluate the damage done to me by ETC.

Hello,

I came across this site while trying to find others who have loss of memory due to ECT. I can and will attest to the fact that I am suffering from permanent memory loss after 24 ECT treatments 8 years ago. This has and continues to affect my life, and I am constantly trying to find ways to combat and adjust and continue to lead a healthy and productive life.

If indeed the psychiatric community does not believe this side effect, I challenge any one to contact me.

Dear Dr. Sackeim:

I am a 43 year old woman who is undergoing Unilateral ECT presently. I have chosen to try this approach vs. Bilateral ECT, due to the permanent memory loss I sustained 5 years ago.

The memory loss sustained from Bilateral ECT was significant. My Psychiatrist claims that the benefits were vast from the treatments. Quite frankly I can't remember.

Since those treatments my I.Q. has dropped from a reported 134 to approximately 122. Of course I have no way of knowing if this is a direct result from the ECT. At the very least it is Coincidental.

Are you offering evaluations? If so, I would be an interested party.

I WAS ON THE ECT.ORG WEBSITE AND I HAD READ THAT YOU ARE WANTING PATIENTS THAT HAVE HAD ECT TREATMENTS WITH MEMORY LOSS FOR A STUDY YOU ARE CONDUCTING.

I WOULD BE MORE THAN INTERESTED . I HAD 6 TREATMENT AND NOW HAVE LONG TERM AND SHORT TERM MEMORY LOSS. CAN YOU HELP ME?

Dear Sir:

I believe I have permanent memory and cognitive damage from 15-20 ECT treatments over a course of 3 years. If you would like for me to participate in an ECT evaluation, you may contact me by e-mail or at the address below.

Sincerely,

In 1996 I went through an episode that was very close to psychosis. I had been in treatment for major depression for about 12 years, moving from tricyclic antidepressants to MAO inhibitors to Prozac. As long as I was in psychotherapy, I did very well. In 1995, I got pregnant and, luckily, had an obstetrician who was willing to let me go back on Prozac after my 5th or 6th month, knowing that my history made not being medicated more dangerous for myself and my child than the possible side effects of the antidepressants. My daughter was born a month early, though basically healthy, on 30 December 1995. As a family the 2 of us were doing fairly well until the summer of 1996. An on-again, off-again problem with undiagnosed headaches sent me to a well established pain clinic, which prescribed, knowing my medical history and current medications, Serzone or Sansert (I can't remember which) to help the headaches. Within the next couple of weeks, I verged on psychosis and eventually became suicidal. I attempted to obtain help from my psychiatrist and the pain clinic but could not and wound up going home and attempting suicide. The hospital I awoke in was run by a doctor who had great faith in ECT and I received 6-7 treatments as well as some basic individual and group therapy. I say this with the knowledge of how intense each of these can be. My first several hospitalizations were in a psychiatric center that made each patient work his or her ass off in group and individual therapy in order to get better. To this day, I consider group therapy at that hospital to be one of the most difficult things I've ever done--and the most helpful. This time, the shock treatments were expected to do the work. I have since been diagnosed with bipolar disorder, which, to me at least, explains why the early hospitalizations dealt very well with my problems in the short-term, yet brought me back again and again. That is my history. Since receiving ECT, I have been hospitalized only once, which is when I was diagnosed with a bipolar disorder (basically hypomania) and prescribed Lithobid. Though I have been fairly stable since, have had no hospitalizations nor manic episodes and remain in regular psychotherapy to deal with the depression, I have noticed that my long-term memory, as well as my short term memory tend to falter and sometimes fail me completely. As a 40 year old woman with a full time job as well as a five year old daughter, it can be daunting to expect to bring something to the forefront of my mind (Serzone v. Sansert, for instance) and become very frustrated by my inability to remember. I just spent 40 minutes at various medication websites trying to find the name Sansert. I am considering looking for a new job, yet fear putting some things on my resume because I may completely forget what I claim I know, be it a computer application, my ability to prioritize or one of my management skills. My daughter constantly brings up things we've talked about, promises I've made, responsibilities I've committed to keeping. You will undoubtedly say that all this falls under the category of "single mother" or not even single "mother syndrome" but I know for a fact that I wasn't always this way. I've forgotten math that used to be second-nature. I forget things that 2 minutes ago I was thinking about in detail in order to pass the information on to someone. So please don't write me off. I have definitely noticed a difference since my ECT (that for some reason took the place of real therapy in that hospital that shall for now remain unnamed). I did always wonder why every patient there was such a good candidate for ECT, but in the throws of depression, anything voiced is subject to question. The funniest part of all

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this to me is, that I had just decided to talk to my therapist about psych-testing. I had it done during my first hospitalization and (I don't know if this is always done) it included an IQ test. I've decided that I want to have another one done because I know I scored very high on the first one. Not long after taking the tests, (after they had gotten the results) the staff kept telling me to use my high intelligence to help me overcome the depths of my depression. I wonder how I will score now.

So that's my story. I am totally willing to talk to any of you about all of this. My experience with ECT was very difficult emotionally, physically, psychologically and for all I know, physiologically. Anything I can do to help someone else in my position from having to experience it as well, is worth everything to me.

Dear Dr. Sackheim,

I'm writing to you in regards to permanent memory loss due to ECT's. I have recently complained of my severe memory loss to my psychiatrist and to my counselor regarding this issue. This evening I decided to google the subject to see what I could find. In the first link I came to I found an article claiming that you claim there is no such thing. I am writing to you to insist that there most certainly is.

I had a series of ECT's several years ago. I'd tell you how long if I could, but it's one of the many things I don't remember. I can tell you it was July, but I don't know what year. Not even after struggling to put together events in my life around that time. Much of my life is missing in my memory. The memory loss I suffer due to the ECT's has left me feeling similar to what I believe and Alzheimer's patient may feel or a person of age. I am 30 years old and am told I had a tremendous memory prior to ECT's. I was able to retell vividly stories from when I was three years old. After the ECT's, I'm lucky to remember what I had for dinner tonight. I would like to tell you a few of the examples.

I ran into a woman who was eager to great me. I had no idea who she was. She told me her name with a look of disbelief that I didn't remember her. She went on to tell me that she worked with me a company a few years ago and that further I had hired her, trained her and worked with her for some time. I looked at the woman like I had never seen her before in my life. There are many many stories like this. I have gone to the movie store and picked up a movie that I'm interested in renting and am told I already saw it not too long ago. I have zero recollection. I bought a gift for my nephew and a few weeks later complimented him on the outfit and asked where he got it clueless that I was the purchaser. I've gone to look at houses to buy during a weekend and later the following week when asked questions regarding the house, I don't even remember I looked at a house!!

This has drastically affected my life. I no longer feel confident enough to hold a job of any sort of responsibility. I have to make notes all the time in fear that I will forget my daily activities. All the while, I feel like I've practically forgotten who I am. Sir, with all due respect, you may have all the degrees in the world, but I can strongly attest to the fact that my life and memory have been altered drastically due to the effects of ECT's. I am more than willing for you to question me and evaluate me to convince you of the same.

Please have the respect for me to respond.



RF

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