

My name is Patricia Sabato, I am a mother of four and I live in the heart of Sandy Hook, Newtown, CT. I am also an advocate certified under the Connecticut General Assembly. In addition, I have first hand experience with the Connecticut Mental Health system, short and long term. I strongly oppose new legislation that is targeted on expanding mental health assessments, treatments, and management as a result of this murder/suicide in our town. The investigation, as I might point out to each committee member on this special task force, is not yet completed, nor have the results been disclosed to the public. This committee should not ignore that Adam Lanza's psychiatric assessment, treatment and management may be a contributing factor in this murder/suicide investigation. It would be damaging to all of our children and would not ensure public safety to pass any legislation that mandates assessing children's mental health.

Throughout the media coverage, we have been encourage to come forward to have a serious conversation about mental illness. We have the State legislators coming to Newtown Connecticut in a special effort to hear our voices. This gives me a strong opportunity to share the Berkely Study with each member of this panel, which show the long term results of "treatments" which the State seems to want to expand. In summary the Berkely Study which I have attached, illustrates, "Children treated with stimulant drugs such as Ritalin to control attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) take up cigarette smoking earlier, smoke more heavily and are more likely to abuse cocaine and other stimulants as adults, according to findings by Nadine Lambert, director of the School Psychology Program at the Graduate School of Education."

GATEWAY

DRUGS <http://www.berkeley.edu/news/berkeleyan/1999/0512/ritalin.html>

The currently mental health system is feeding our children into this drug addiction. Until we get a handle on the outcome of the investigation and sealed documents, it would not be in the best interest of our children to pass sweeping, reactive mental health laws that push more diagnosing and treatments. There are too many unanswered questions. I encourage the State to focus on the prescription drug problem we have in Newtown, the State, and for that matter this Country. It is my understanding that prescription drugs here in Newtown are ending up on the streets that actually might be intended for the pharmacies. Large bottles of oxycotin and percocet with scratched out labels are falling into the hands of our children.

New York City Mayor Bloomberg noticed our growing national crisis with prescription drugs which prompted action on his part in the state of New York days after the mass murder/suicide. The mayor pointed out that children as young as 12

were getting their hands on these powerful mind numbing medications. New York City's health commissioner, told The New York Times Thursday that opioid painkillers are "heroin in pill form."

In closing I would like to submit the link between psychiatric drugs and school shooters which I believe this special task force needs to focus on:

Psychiatric Drugs and Violence

School Shooters and Other Murders

At least fourteen recent school shootings were committed by those taking or withdrawing from psychiatric drugs. There have been 109 wounded and 58 killed.

Of these 14, seven were seeing either a psychiatrist (5 of them) or psychologist (2 of them). It is not known whether or not the other half were seeing a psychiatrist, as it has not been published.

1. Huntsville, Alabama – February 5, 2012: 15-year-old Hammad Memon shot and killed another Discover Middle School student Todd Brown. Memon had a history for being treated for ADHD and depression. He was taking the antidepressant Zoloft and "other drugs for the conditions." He had been seeing a psychiatrist and psychologist.

2. Kauhajoki, Finland – September 23, 2008: 22-year-old culinary student Matti Saari shot and killed 9 students and a teacher, and wounded another student, before killing himself. Saari was taking an SSRI and a benzodiazapine. He was also seeing a psychologist.

3. Dekalb, Illinois – February 14, 2008: 27-year-old Steven Kazmierczak shot and killed five people and wounded 21 others before killing himself in a Northern Illinois University auditorium. According to his girlfriend, he had recently been taking Prozac, Xanax and Ambien. Toxicology results showed that he still had trace amount of Xanax in his system. He had been seeing a psychiatrist.

4. Jokela, Finland – November 7, 2007: 18-year-old Finnish gunman Pekka-Eric Auvinen had been taking antidepressants before he killed eight people and wounded a dozen more at Jokela High School in southern Finland, then committed suicide.

5. Cleveland, Ohio – October 10, 2007: 14-year-old Asa Coon stormed through his school with a gun in each hand, shooting and wounding four before taking his own life. Court records show Coon had been placed on the antidepressant Trazodone.

6. Red Lake, Minnesota – March 2005: 16-year-old Jeff Weise, on Prozac, shot and killed his grandparents, then went to his school on the Red Lake Indian Reservation where he shot dead 7 students and a teacher, and wounded 7 before killing himself.

7. Greenbush, New York – February 2004: 16-year-old Jon Romano strolled into his high school in east Greenbush and opened fire with a shotgun. Special education teacher Michael Bennett was hit in the leg. Romano had been taking "medication for depression". He had previously seen a psychiatrist.

8. Wahluke, Washington – April 10, 2001: Sixteen-year-old Cory Baadsgaard took a rifle to his high school and held 23 classmates and a teacher hostage. He had been taking the antidepressant Effexor.

9. El Cajon, California – March 22, 2001: 18-year-old Jason Hoffman, on the antidepressants Celexa and Effexor, opened fire on his classmates, wounding three students and two teachers at Granite Hills High School. He had been seeing a psychiatrist before the shooting.

10. Williamsport, Pennsylvania – March 7, 2001: 14-year-old Elizabeth Bush was taking the antidepressant Prozac when she shot at fellow students, wounding one.

11. Conyers, Georgia – May 20, 1999: 15-year-old T.J. Solomon was being treated with the stimulant Ritalin when he opened fire on and wounded six of his classmates.

12. Columbine, Colorado – April 20, 1999: 18-year-old Eric Harris and his accomplice, Dylan Klebold, killed 12 students and a teacher and wounded 26 others before killing themselves. Harris was on the antidepressant Luvox. Klebold's medical records remain sealed. Both shooters had been in anger-management classes and had undergone counseling. Harris had been seeing a psychiatrist before the shooting.

13. Notus, Idaho – April 16, 1999: 15-year-old Shawn Cooper fired two shotgun rounds in his school, narrowly missing students. He was taking a prescribed SSRI antidepressant and Ritalin.

14. Springfield, Oregon – May 21, 1998: 15-year-old Kip Kinkel murdered his parents and then proceeded to school where he opened fire on students in the cafeteria, killing two and wounding 25. Kinkel had been taking the antidepressant Prozac. Kinkel had been attending “anger control classes” and was under the care of a psychologist.

There are also 10 additional recent murders and murder-suicides, resulting in 43 dead and 37 wounded:

1. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania – March 8, 2012: 30-year-old John Shick, former patient of University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) and former student at nearby Duquesne University, shot and killed one and injured six inside UPMC’s Western Psychiatrist Institute. Nine antidepressants were identified among the drugs police found in Shick’s apartment.

2. Seal Beach, California – October 12, 2011: Scott DeKraai, a harbor tugboat worker, entered the hair salon where his ex-wife worked, killing her and seven others and injuring one. At DeKraai’s initial hearing, his attorney indicated to the judge that DeKraai was prescribed the antidepressant Trazodone and the “mood stabilizer” Topamax.

3. Lakeland, Florida – May 3, 2009: Toxicology test results showed that 34-year-old Troy Bellar was on Tegretol, a drug prescribed for “bi-polar disorder,” when he shot and killed his wife and two of his three children in their home before killing himself.

4. Granberry Crossing, Alabama – April 26, 2009: 53-year-old Fred B. Davis shot and killed a police officer and wounded a sheriff’s deputy who had responded to a call that Davis had threatened a neighbor with a gun. Prescription drug bottles found at the scene showed that Davis was prescribed the antipsychotic drug Geodon.

5. Middletown, Maryland – April 17, 2009: Christopher Wood shot and killed his wife, three small children and himself inside their home. Toxicology test results verified that Wood had been taking the antidepressants Cymbalta and Paxil and the anti-anxiety drugs BuSpar and Xanax.

6. Concord, California – January 11, 2009: Jason Montes, 33, shot and killed his wife and then himself at home. Montes had earlier begun taking the antidepressant Prozac for depression related to his impending divorce and a recent bankruptcy.

7. Little Rock, Arkansas – August 14, 2008: Less than 48 hours after Timothy Johnson shot and killed Arkansas Democratic Party Chairman Bill Gwatney, the Little Rock Police declared they were investigating shooter’s use of the antidepressant Effexor, which was found in Johnson’s house. A Little Rock city police report later stated that Johnson “was on an anti-depressant and that the drug may have played a part in his ‘irrational and violent behavior.’”

8. Dekalb, Illinois – February 14, 2008: 27-year-old Steven Kazmierczak shot and killed five people and wounded 21 others before killing himself in a Northern Illinois University auditorium. According to his girlfriend, he had recently been taking Prozac, Xanax and Ambien. Toxicology results showed that he still had trace amount of Xanax in his system.

9. North Meridian, Florida – July 8, 2003: Doug Williams killed five and wounded nine of his fellow Lockheed Martin employees before killing himself. Williams was reported as having been taking two antidepressants, Zoloft and Celexa, for depression after a failed marriage.

10. Wakefield, Massachusetts – December 26, 2000: 42-year-old computer technician Michael McDermott had been taking three antidepressants when he hunted down employees in the accounting and human resources offices where he worked, killing seven.

Studies tying Psychiatric Drugs to Violence and Homicide

Psychiatric drugs are mind altering chemicals designed to alter emotions, behavior and thinking processes. The following information provides the documented risks of these drugs in relation to them causing violence. It includes international drug regulatory warnings, studies, and adverse reaction reports filed with the U.S. FDA from 2004-2011.

Common brand name psychiatric drugs include Prozac, Zoloft, Paxil, Cymbalta, Wellbutrin, Risperdal, Seroquel, Abilify, Ritalin, Adderall, Concerta, Klonopin, and Xanax.

A) Drug Agency Regulatory Warnings on Psychiatric Drugs Causing Violence and Suicide Side Effects –

There have been 58 drug regulatory agency warnings from ten countries and the European Union, that include warnings of antidepressant induced violence, hostility, aggression, self-harm, homicidal ideation and suicide risk. **See Tab A**

B) Drug Studies on Psychiatric Drugs Causing Violence and Suicide Side Effects – There have been 33 studies in eight countries on antidepressant induced violence, homicidal ideation, aggression, mania/psychosis, hallucinations and suicide risks. **See Tab B**

C) Adverse Reaction Reports filed with the US FDA on Psychiatric Drugs Causing Violence and Suicide Side Effects – There have been 29,936 adverse reactions reported to the US FDA in connection with psychiatric drugs and violence, hostility, aggression, physical assault and suicide. **See Tab C**

Tab A) Psychiatric Drug Violence and Suicide Side Effects Reported to the FDA:

There have been 58 drug regulatory agency warnings from ten countries (United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Japan, Germany, Ireland, United Kingdom, France and Russia), and the European Union, showing how psychiatric drugs have been tied to violence and suicide, which include:

- 47 warnings on psychiatric drugs causing suicide/risk/attempts
- 12 warnings on psychiatric drugs causing mania/psychosis
- 11 warnings on psychiatric drugs causing violence, hostility, or aggression
- 6 warnings on psychiatric drugs causing self-harm
- 4 warnings on psychiatric drugs causing abnormal behavior
- 4 warnings on psychiatric drugs causing hallucinations
- 1 warning on psychiatric drugs causing **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**al ideation

Tab B) Drug Studies on Psychiatric Drugs Causing Violence and Suicide Side Effects:

There have been 33 studies in eight countries (United Kingdom, France, United States, Canada, Sweden, Israel, Italy, and Germany), which found a connection between psychiatric drugs and violence and suicide, which include:

- 26 studies on psychiatric drugs causing suicide/risk/attempts
- 6 studies on psychiatric drugs causing violence, hostility, or aggression
- 4 studies on psychiatric drugs causing mania/psychosis
- 2 studies on psychiatric drugs causing **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**
- 1 study on psychiatric drugs causing hallucinations

Tab C) Psychiatric Drug Violence and Suicide Side Effects Reported to the FDA:

There have been 29,936 violence adverse reactions that have been reported to the US FDA's Adverse Event Reporting System (MedWatch), between 2004 and 2011, this breaks down to:

- 9,310 cases of psychiatric drugs causing completed suicides
- 7,871 cases of psychiatric drugs causing suicide attempts
- 2,795 cases of psychiatric drugs causing mania
- 7,250 cases of psychiatric drugs causing aggression
- 872 cases of psychiatric drugs causing homicidal ideation
- 607 cases of psychiatric drugs causing hostility
- 504 cases of psychiatric drugs causing physical assault
- 359 cases of psychiatric drugs causing homicide
- 191 cases of psychiatric drugs causing psychosis
- 177 cases of psychiatric drugs causing violence-related symptoms