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Are Your Children Crazy?

Dr. Jane M. Orient, "Are Your Children Crazy?", Health Sentinel, July 27, 2006,

Congress and President Bush apparently think that a lot of children have a "mental health" problem. Or that enough of them do to justify taking millions of dollars from taxpayers to fund a universal "mental health screening" for children, and eventually for everyone.

Personally, I think - from the perspective of a person who never had any - that almost all children act crazy. Those who don't are, by definition, abnormal, because they don't act like the others.

The main problem with about half of them is that they are boys. Such children are obviously made of snips and snails and puppy dog tails. On the farm there is a solution for that: a procedure for turning boy lambs into non-ram lambs. After a quick little operation, they act like peaceful little lambs instead of aggressive, disruptive rams.

We don't do surgery like that on little boys, of course, but we do have our methods: such as behavioral therapy and chemicals.

There are those who argue with some passion that society has to do something. Bad, disruptive, antisocial or depressed little kids make lots of trouble for parents and schoolteachers. Worse, they can grow up into dysfunctional, unhappy or troublemaking adults. That snotty little boy might become a dissenting nonconformist or even a rebellious man, who could throw a monkey wrench into our smoothly functioning society. We have to catch them early - for their own good.

Teams of experts are awaiting the infusion of cash. They'll be ensconced in your child's school before you even know it. A bonus is that your little darlings will probably give them quite a bit of information about you also, and then you too can receive therapy you didn't know you needed.

Do you sometimes raise your voice? Ever spank them? Hug them inappropriately? Have politically incorrect attitudes? Use forbidden words? Own a gun? Smoke cigarettes, especially indoors? Read extremist literature? Refuse to recycle? Prepare for a knock on the door.

There are many tools at the disposal of the mental health squad. Counseling sessions. Drugs (Ritalin, antidepressants, tranquilizers, maybe some new ones that need to be tested on some experimental subjects of your child's age). Group therapy. Removing the child from the home. (This may be a "last resort," but often the mere threat can accomplish wonders.)

If an interview with a child raises concerns, the next step might be a home visit. This could discover poor parenting skills, inadequate housekeeping, harmful literature, or a baby who is crying or has a bruise (signs of abuse?).

It is true that some interventions have potential side effects, say drug dependence or suicide, but to assure the health of the population some shared sacrifice and risk are needed. We will have excellent means of tracking outcomes to improve future therapies. The mental health workers' impressions will all be recorded in the school records. An added benefit could accrue to would-be employers or college recruiters.

Some cautions are in order. Democrats might think that potential future Republicans are crazy. Republicans might think the opposite. Should an extremist Christian be one of the screeners, he might think that nonbelievers are possessed by the devil. And an extremist secular humanist (if such exist) might think that an overly religious child is at risk for mental illness if not already impaired.

In fact, parents ought to be asking some very serious questions before the government experts interview the first child.

What are the credentials of the screeners? Most importantly, how many children have they raised to adulthood, and with what outcome?

What are the criteria for possible abnormality? What is the scientific validation? How often do different observers agree? Have any long-term studies shown a solid correlation with adult performance in life? Do today's oddball children fail, or might they turn into our greatest achievers?

Will you be allowed to get a second opinion? Can you see the record and enter corrections if indicated? Will the record at any point be destroyed, or will the stigma of a diagnosis such as "personality disorder" follow the child throughout life?

What will happen if your child fails the screen? What sort of treatment will be given? Who will supervise it? What if you don't approve of it?

What's the very worst thing that the program will have the power to do to you or your child, say if your worst enemy were to gain control of it?

Who might profit from the program (perhaps discoverable by asking who lobbied for it)? Do drug companies expect to have a large number of new consumers of their psychoactive drugs?

What are the results of studies of long-term use of drugs like Ritalin, which has effects on the brain similar to those of cocaine? Have there even been any such studies?

Can you refuse to participate in the program? If you do refuse, what are the repercussions?

What is the evidence that the program, at best, will be anything other than a waste of millions of dollars? Miraculously, throughout human history most of those crazy children have become stable, productive adults without federally mandated psychiatric treatment. Still more amazingly, their parents have managed also.

Psychiatry in the hands of government, instead of independent physicians who are working for patients, reeks of Orwell's 1984 or the Soviet era. The very need to ask the questions should tell us the right answer for this program: It's crazy.

Dr. Jane M. Orient is an internist practicing in Tucson, AZ and executive director of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons. Copyright 2004 United Press International. Reprinted with permission.

Comments:

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Left by: Anonymous on Jul. 31, 2006

Subject: Are your children crazy?

I would really like to acknowledge Dr. Jane Orient. I thought this was an excellent article! I only wish that more parents around the country could have this information in order to prepare them and to stop their children from getting labeled mentally ill when the teen screen program comes to their children's schools to prevent this child abuse.

Left by: Anonymous on Jul. 30, 2006

Subject: Re: Disagree

Your disagreement is noted. While regular family doctors may not be well qualified to sport certain illnesses like ADHD, how qualified are those that are sent into homes? What is their workload and how much time do they spend on true diagnosis of each child? Are they more of social worker and psychologist types, or are they credentialed clinical psychiatrists? Are they liable for their mistakes, or are their mistakes left at the door of the family?

Independently of that, where is the line between family responsibility and society responsibility? Some families are capable and willing of incredible support for their children, while the support of medical and educational systems tend to be mediocre at best. Yes, there are opposite cases, but those tend to be less common, even if much more "news worthy", along the lines of

"man bites god" vs. "dog bites man".

Such visits should have only ADVISORY power. Any INTERVENTION should be done with full legal process available to both sides, and with full liability exposure to both sides.

Left by: Anonymous on Jul. 30, 2006

Subject: Loss of Liberty

A thorough and thoughtful article. We are truly on the doorstep of Orwell's '1984'. Such government support of 'mental health' and the use of psychoactive drugs 'for our own good' is a step back into the exact practices and iron fist of the former Soviet Union. The motivation for this in America is twofold: (1) mega-political payback to the pharmaceutical industry who will make billions from drugging our children; and (2) to raise the degree of control over our population by monied interests. The latter is no less than a brazen attempt to turn us all into us all into 'good' little boys and girls so that when we grow up, we are dutiful, conforming and submissive little worker bees who always do as we're told and never aspire to anything better than our assigned lot in life. Again, we have seen this before in the former Soviet Union. It is a future of suppression of freedom of thought and of all religion except that sanctioned by the state. Our founding fathers must be convulsing in their graves at the loss of liberty that Big Money and Big Pharma are actively pursuing and planning for all of us. America and Western Civilization beware! We'd better switch off our mind-numbing TVs while we still can think for ourselves and start doing something about this. -- Rod Jenkins, FL

Left by: Roman on Jul. 30, 2006

Subject: Reviewed comments

As a note – all comments and points of view are accepted. We only filter out comments that contain profanity or engage in unconstructive name calling.

Left by: Anonymous on Jul. 30, 2006

Subject: Disagree.

The government isn't sending psychs into schools to go on a bad parent hunt. They are sending experts in who can spot learning disabilities and differences which are caused by a neurological misfiring in the brain. These are real in spite of what people who don't have them like to think.

I'm an adult who was untreated and undiagnosed until well into adulthood. I can assure you that it makes life miserable, not because we are lazy or unmotivated or stupid, but because we are accused of being so in spite of high IQs and working harder than our peers who don't have a disorder. Mine happens to be ADHD and it is real.

We have many positive attributes. Unfortunately, society doesn't recognize or accept our different learning styles. Its easier to call us names and make us miserable. Medications can level the playing field for us so we can succeed. First though, you have to be diagnosed accurately.

Most drs aren't qualified but they are the ones who do most diagnosing. There is a high rate of misdiagnosing other conditions for ADHD or vice versa. The experts going into the schools will have tests they will give which will more accurately pin point what is wrong. It will save many kids from stimulant meds which help an ADHDer but are harmful for someone who isn't ADHD.

I don't know why I am wasting my time on this. It says you review these before they are posted and its obvious that no one who disagrees gets posted, otherwise there would already be at least one.

I'm done. You can sit on your smug bottom and feel better than everyone who isn't exactly like you and call us gullible. I only pray that you never have a child with a neurological disability because they would probably become suicidal and not live to see adulthood with you accusing them of behaviors that they really can't control.

Left by: Anonymous on Jul. 29, 2006

Subject: Are Your Children Crazy?

Spot on article by Dr. Orient. We cannot continue to let our children to be forced into being drug addicts and especially on harmful psychiatric drugs. What a shame that in this day and age children are being labeled "mental" for being children. Teen Screen is a bogus intrusion of privacy for the bottom line profit of the big drug companies. Let's ask for screening of the top executives of the pharmaceutical companies and the psychiatrists to find out what they are "really" up to.

Left by: Anonymous on Jul. 29, 2006

Subject: Are Your Children Crazy?

Wonderful article. If only parents will read this and take heed. Too many people have fallen under the spell of "the experts" and never question anything they say despite the fact that

psychiatrists frequently have failing marriages, suicidal tendencies, criminal behavior and addiction problems. I've collected this information myself. It's out there for anyone who cares enough to look. Thank you.

Left by: Anonymous on Jul. 28, 2006

Subject: Screening

The nub of your excellent observations is that the proposed -- and accomplished, in some parts of the country -- screening is a political, not a medical activity. This scientifically indefensible recasting of political or social opinions and behavior as "medical conditions" is a determined and definite step in the direction of social control. The Soviets were not the first to use it, merely one of the better publicized. The religious point is especially well made.

Left by: Anonymous on Jul. 28, 2006

Subject: Travesty

Thank you, Dr. Jane, for your article. This travesty, furthermore, illegal, and to a great extent criminal for-profit activity needs to be exposed as you have. The government was never entitled by law to delve so deeply in American lives and to wrest control from the individual and the family. It has been found out that today's street and school crime and violence is perpetrated mostly by those already on psychiatric drugs. That accounts too for mothers that have maimed or drowned their children. I don't see yet a responsible candidate yet for the presidency, one that would promote honesty, decency, and end a system that is getting more corrupted by the day. Can you run for President yourself? You have my vote! Oscar Wegner - TennisTeacher.com

Left by: Anonymous on Jul. 28, 2006

Subject: Crazy Children

Very good article! I do wonder what the long-term effects are of drugging our children, both on the child and on the society. We can certainly look at the effects of the 60s on the present society. Carter

Left by: Anonymous on Jul. 28, 2006

Subject: "Are Your Children Crazy?"

Thank you for the article. It's simply a race to alert enough parents that this is occurring in the USA. Please sign and forward this petition: <http://www.petitiononline.com/TScreen/petition.html>

Left by: Anonymous on Jul. 28, 2006

Subject: Despair

How very American it is a disgrace I truly hope the UK dont follow the US Govt down this road. Beyond belief I agree its the next stage of 1984 thought policing!

Site Developed by: Tony Weston