

Everyone,

If a patient has **both** anxiety and depression, is FDA approval for both, only buspirone? If I am wrong, please get back to me and I will include correction in next Sentinel.

Last Friday's NY Times, "Ordering Five Million Deaths Online" questions Medicare's crack down on prescribing opioids, saying that now folks will turn to substances even more portent, such as even carfentanal. Carfentinel is extremely lethal, was developed to sedate elephants.

JAMA, 3 April, compares life expectancy in the United States in terms of income. People at the bottom 1% income compared with those at the highest 1% income, die earlier. Low-income women die about 10 years earlier and low-income men die 15 years earlier.

Last Monday's NY Times had letters responding to an article "In Praise of ADHD" saying that being medicated does not decrease creativity in the hyperactive. Not mentioned in the original article or these letters is that "ADHD" only applies to those who have clinically significant educational, occupational, or social disabilities. Only being extremely active, and so forth, does not make the diagnosis.

Headline in this month's Worst Pills, Best Pills News, "Topiramate: Limit use to treatment of seizures, do not use for other conditions." In the article, it goes further and says

topiramate should only be used after a patient has failed to respond to first-line anti-epileptic medications.

A twist on handhelds is that the Device has given parents a sense of control. When we were kids, going out the door meant we were on our own. Now with handheld devices, parents have the option of tracking youth's whereabouts, to where parents have even been arrested for not tracking their children! Seem unthinkable? Utah has passed a law prohibiting parents from being so arrested, called "free-range parenting." Do we need such a law in Maryland?

Sunday's NY Times book review of Blue Dreams, page 15, makes a number of claims:

1] The standard explanation SSRIs is that they boost serotonin levels, but studies have never shown that the depressed suffer from low serotonin levels.

2] To tell patients, "if you are a diabetic, you take insulin, if you are depressed, you take an antidepressant" doesn't hold as a comparison since there is no test similar to glucose level in patients with depression.

3] The author, Lauren Slater, has been diagnosed with bipolar disorder and OCD. She is presently on half-a-dozen psychotropic meds. While the book focuses on untoward impact of the medications, including the difficulty of withdrawing from SSRIs, she remains very productive -- has had

nine books published over the 30 years since she was first placed on fluoxetine.

This month's Harvard Health Letter recommendations to stave off dementia, no guarantee however, in those who already have mild cognitive impairment:

- 1] Practice sleep hygiene
- 2] Physical exercise
- 3] Healthy diet.
- 4] Taking part in social activities
- 5] Learning new things.

Ethan Crouch's release from prison this month reminds us of his attorney's plea that he had affluenza, supposedly making him incapable of distinguishing right from wrong, contributing to his driving under the influence and killing four. Plea failed, but we still have the question of when should being extremely wealthy be regarded as an etiological factor in a mental illness?

This reminds us of the famous Leopold and Loeb trial of kidnapping and murder by two very wealthy students who thought, incorrectly, that their wealth implied they could kill a 14-year boy, 1924, without consequences.

But might affluenza be a more generally issue, not just of homicidal behavior? Two of my classmates of the late 60s come to mind:

1] A heir of the Reynolds Tobacco family was to receive \$21 M when he reached his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, died taking a risky climb in California a year before reaching that birthday.

2] A heir of the Edison family, who got a monthly allowance of \$1,000, 1948 dollars, died taking a risky climb in the Alps. \$1,000.00, 1948, had the same buying power as \$10,054 today.

When talking to these two while we three were at a prep school, Putney School, Vermont, I heard that part of the reason their parents had selected Putney was that wealth and business success were not that School's values. If treating someone having this negative wealth impact, how to code? We suggest, Z65.8 Affluenza.

While not true of those I knew, some would suggest that the manifestations of affluenza are insensitivity, elitism, and materialism.

Roger A.