



Dansk Psykiatrisk Selskab

Copenhagen, March 5, 2014

Dear Cochrane Schizophrenia Group / Depression-Anxiety Group

We are writing to you in order to draw your attention to an article published January 6, 2014 in a major Danish newspaper, Politiken, by professor Peter Gøtzsche, director of the Nordic Cochrane Center, based in Copenhagen.

An English translation of Peter Gøtzsche's article can be found at these two home pages:

<http://www.madinamerica.com/2014/01/psychiatry-gone-astray/>

<http://davidhealy.org/psychiatry-gone-astray/>

The article describes 10 'myths' about Danish psychiatry and psychiatry in general, and contains a severe critique of all physicians who prescribe and administer psychotropic drugs.

The article provoked a major debate in Danish media during the months of January and February. In particular professor Gøtzsche's statement, that "the citizens of Denmark would be better off, if all psychotropic drugs were withdrawn from the market" has led to a massive response from authorities and organisations, correcting what we consider a provocative and potentially dangerous statement, which puts patients at risk by tempting them to avoid necessary medical treatment or give up the prescribed medication.

The authorities who have joined in the critique of professor Gøtzsche involves the minister of Health and Prevention, the director of the Danish Health and Medicines Authority, the director of the Danish Patients Association, the president of the Cancer Society, the president of the Danish Psychiatric Association and the president of LVS (Organization of Danish Medical Societies). Last year, the president of the Organization of Danish Medical Societies wrote a critical comment to Professor Peter Gøtzsche's tone of debate in another Danish newspaper, Berlingske Tidende.

We enclose an translation of that article, responding to other accusations against Danish doctors.

As professors and clinicians in psychiatry we are of course interested in providing the safest and most efficient treatment possible to our patients. We are also open to critique and regularly discuss in both media, patients fora and scientific fora, to share the challenges of psychiatric treatment and try to improve treatment results.

However, we are very surprised with the critique from professor Gøtzsche. We find some of his points to be irrelevant, since it is common knowledge to all psychiatrists that psychotropic medication should be used with caution /and a stern focus on the balance between effect and side effects. Other points we find to be incorrect and misleading.

Our question is now: How do you, with the specific knowledge you have on antipsychotics and antidepressants respectively, evaluate Peter Gøtzsche's statements as presented in his article.

We would be very pleased if you would take up the task of making such an evaluation.

Sincerely

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