



ENIGMA

BIPOLAR NEWS AND VIEWS



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Enigma - a perplexing or baffling matter, person etc.

Yes, this is still the newsletter of the Otago Mental Health Support Trust. We have now named the newsletter ENIGMA to reflect our interest in many perplexing mental health issues. As always, our focus is on quality of life issues for people who have been labelled “bipolar”. We expect that these matters will inevitably be of interest to people in the wider “mental health community”. In future issues we will examine the mystery of bipolar disorder itself. How can it be that with all the advances of modern medical science, with the wonders of neuro-imaging to picture brain activity and with the map of the human genome available to us, that there is still no real answer as to why some people experience psychosis or devastating changes of mood? Vague and patronising talk of chemical imbalances is no longer acceptable. When will we see some science in psychiatry? We will also dissect some of the mysterious language used by psychiatry and judges to justify incarceration and enforced “treatment” in the name of mental health. See the discussion of “insight” and “compliance” in this issue. Look for “the psychiatric system” in coming months. Leading this month we look at the recent decision of the Advertising Standards Authority regarding Eli Lilly’s unethical advertising of olanzapine. It baffles us that a company whose products carry such clear risk for producing human suffering are allowed to use misleading and unbalanced advertising direct to the New Zealand public.

The use of a little humour in recovery from mental distress is highly valued. Look for a touch of fun on page 2.

Lilly Put in Their Place

In the August/September ENIGMA we reviewed *Lives Moving Forward*, a book published by pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly. We suggested that the book was actually an advertisement for Lilly’s drug olanzapine and that it was unbalanced and did not meet the requirements for therapeutic product advertising in this country. The Advertising Standards Authority agreed with us and Lilly is now expected to withdraw the book.

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HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

The Bipolar Network office will be closed over the Christmas and New Year period.

Closed from: Monday 24th December 2007
Reopen: Monday 7th January 2008

CHRISTMAS BARBEQUE FRIDAY 21ST DECEMBER

JOIN US AT WOODHAUGH GARDENS 12 NOON

RSVP TO 477 2598 BY 14TH DECEMBER.



Lilly put in their place contd.

Our submission to the Authority was that the book was an advertisement, that it was misleading, deceiving, and grossly unbalanced. We said that the book did not meet the strict criteria required for advertising drugs. Incidentally, it is only in New Zealand and the USA that such companies are permitted to advertise their drugs direct to the public.

We sympathise with those people who told their stories of recovery in good faith, not realising that they would be used in an advertisement for a particular drug. We look forward to more ethical behaviour by Eli Lilly in the future although given their international track record this is unlikely. It is imperative that the promotional activities of drug companies are carefully scrutinised. They have a responsibility to their shareholders to maximise sales of their products, not necessarily to improve quality of life for their consumers.

By Polar

Kiwis say no to big pharma

Enigma wholeheartedly applauds the group of psychiatrists and other health workers in the Waikato who this year voted to stop drug company sponsorship of weekly hot breakfasts at their journal club. The doctors recognised that pharmaceutical promotion affects prescribing behaviour, in terms both of impaired quality and increased cost. See the full report in the New Zealand Medical Journal

<http://www.nzma.org.nz/journal/120-1251/2471/>

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

Who we are and where we stand. Ko Papatuanuku toku turangawaewae.

The talk Jim Crowe was to give on his mental health work in Asia did not go ahead as Jim had the 'flu on the day. As an alternative the documentary *The Secret Life of the Manic Depressive* by Stephen Fry that screened on TV1 earlier in the month was rerun for people to watch. We had a good turn out on the day (25+) and it was great to meet people from other organisations who had not been to the rooms before. A light lunch was enjoyed by all.

We have copies of the **Stephen Fry** Documentary on DVD or Video Tape in our Library for you to borrow. If you have access to a computer it can be viewed on the web at YouTube. This is a brilliant insight into the life and thoughts of a well known actor living with the bipolar disorder diagnosis. See the review on page 4.

DISCLAIMER

The opinions and articles expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of the Otago Mental Health Support Trust or anyone associated with the organisation.

New...Evening Bipolar discussion groups

Interest in separate women's and men's groups is not as great as in the past. Through next year we will run a bi-monthly evening series of general discussion groups. There will be an invited expert speaker on each topic to facilitate discussion. The draft list of topics includes:

January 31st *Seclusion and the Mental Health Act.*

March 27th *Comparing the roles of psychiatrist and psychologist.*

May 29th *Making the most of your GP.*

July 31st *Stigma and discrimination.*

September 25th *Working with a needs assessor.*

November 27th *Nutrition, exercise and mental health.*

All are welcome to these discussions starting at 5.30pm at our rooms.



The Staff of the Bipolar Network, together with Trust Board members, take this opportunity to wish our readers all the very best for the coming festive season. Have a safe and happy Christmas and step into 2008 in good heart.

A Recipe for Happiness

Take twelve whole months. Clean them thoroughly of all bitterness, hate and jealousy, Make them just as fresh and clean as possible.

Now cut each month into twenty-eight, (twenty-nine in a leap year) thirty or thirty-one different parts, but don't make the whole batch at once. Prepare it one day at a time out of these ingredients.

Mix well into each day one part of faith, one part of patience, one part of courage and one part of work. Add to each day one part of hope, faithfulness, generosity and one good deed.

Season the whole thing with a dash of good spirits, a sprinkle of fun, a pinch of play and a cupful of humour. Pour all of this into a vessel of love. Cook thoroughly over radiant joy, garnish with a smile and serve with quietness, unselfishness and cheerfulness.

YOU'RE BOUND TO HAVE A HAPPY NEW YEAR

Visit our Website at:

www.bipolarotago.balance.org.nz

(Thanks to Balance for hosting the site)

An Online Bipolar Forum

http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/bipolar_and_borderline/

Would you like the newsletter by email? Let us know. You would get it faster and we would save on postage.

An enigma in our Enigma

There are prizes for the most original answers which may not necessarily be correct!

Fur enough?

A woman is walking slowly up and down at one of the larger of London's railway stations. She stops, searches her handbag and puts a coin in a slot.

She frowns, searches for another coin and is about to put that in the slot when she pauses, takes off her expensive fur coat, folds it neatly over one arm and only then deposits the coin.

She grunts in disgust and quickly walks away.

What was she doing?

Knees down!

There they are - eleven grown men, in a straight line, crawling on hands and knees across a school playground.

What on earth are they up to?

Insight and other puzzles - Mental Health Commission

This research article by the Mental Health Commission looked at some words commonly used by judges and psychiatrists when deciding someone's fate under the mental health act. They found that words like "lack of insight" and "non compliance" are frequently used to justify the forced treatment and hospitalization of people. This is a dangerous process as the terms are poorly defined and the assumption is made that they have a clear and valid medical meaning which does not actually exist. Many would say that "lack of insight" has come to mean in reality that the person does not agree with the psychiatrist's diagnosis. Similarly a person who is "non compliant" is one who does not willingly accept the treatment, presumed to be appropriate, prescribed by a psychiatrist.

"A number of researchers who have studied physical illness portray non-compliance as rational decision-making rather than "irrational and deviant behaviour" (McCabe 2000) People make treatment decisions based on a cost-benefit analysis of the impact on their lives; rather than demonstrating lack of insight, their decisions strongly suggest insightful behaviour. Importantly, research found that 17% of patients who were assessed as having no insight took their medication while over 50% with insight did not take their medication (Lin, 1979; McCabe, 2000). In research with people diagnosed with schizophrenia who received outpatient treatment, there was no difference in the level of insight between those who did and did not comply with neuroleptic medication (Garavan, 1998; McCabe, 2000)."

See the full article at <http://www.mhc.govt.nz/publications/2005/diesfeld.html>

GOOD PUBLICITY



It's nice to read different newsletters and see the Bipolar Network getting a mention. Recently the article on Omega-3 which was printed in our Aug/Sept issue appeared in the Oct/Nov newsletter of The Mental Illness Fellowship of South Australia. Also the Otago University's Children's Issues Centre gave us a mention in their latest newsletter regarding the recent 2007 Youth Expo at which we had a stall. Of the 28 organisations involved only four were mentioned in the article. The Otago Mental Health Support Trust was one of them. This is great publicity for us.

Annual General Meeting report

There was a good turn-out for this meeting with only a few apologies. We now have a new chairman of the Trust Board. Mr. Ian Williams was unanimously voted in to the position. There are no new members of the Board and the existing members are to continue in their role. We are extremely grateful for their generous services.

We look forward to working together in the future.

Our thanks to Mr Jim Crowe, our past chairman, for his invaluable input.



Review: The Secret Life of the Manic Depressive

The Secret Life of the Manic Depressive was screened on TV1 late in September. The two part documentary was based on Stephen Fry's personal journey unravelling the mysteries of bipolar disorder (manic depression) with which he is diagnosed. Fry's eloquent uncovering of myths/half truths and truths kept me riveted. His dry frank manner was informative. Throughout the documentary he frequently threw reflective questions back to the viewer. What is this bipolar thing? Is there a test for it? How is it treated?

In an interview with the BBC Fry explains why he made the documentary: *"I'm in a rare and privileged position of being able to help address the whole business of stigma, and why it is that the rest of society finds it so easy to wrinkle their noses, cross over, or block their ears when confronted with an illness of the mind and of the mood - especially when we reach out with such sympathy towards diseases of the liver or other organs that don't affect who we are and how we feel in quite such devastating complexity."* His interviews with people throughout the programme were respectful and curious, covering a broad range of topics and people with polar perspectives on manic depression.

One of the most revealing/disturbing truths to come out of the documentary was that children as young as two years old are being diagnosed with and in many cases treated for bipolar disorder, a life sentence of stigma for many of those kids.

Many thanks to these people for their support:



AAW Jones Charitable Trust, ACE Shacklock Charitable Trust, Balance, Dempsey Trust, The HealthCare Otago Charitable Trust, John Ilott Trust, Colortronics