

## COMMENTARY: We must stop treating childh

**GateHouse News Service**

Posted Jul 12, 2010 @ 09:00 AM

COMMENTARY BY JACOB AZERRAD — In 2001, Harry Markopolos of Whitman repeatedly warned the authorities about Bernie Madoff. No one listened. Only a serious downturn in the economy led to Madoff's downfall.

It's not a Ponzi scheme, but once again, no one is listening and the red flags are everywhere. This time the victims are our very young, innocent children in the millions. Today, children as young as 2, are being prescribed powerful anti-psychotic medications. Side effects include tics, drooling, and incessant eating. Some children have gained up to 100 pounds and often progress to becoming diabetic.

This is not the old story about ADD or ADHD and the use of Ritalin or other approved drugs in use since the 1970s. This is not about helping the child who fidgets and can't concentrate in an elementary school classroom.

This is about tens of thousands of energetic, outgoing, healthy, and normal 3- and 4-year-olds who just won't sit still in Mommy and Me. It is those children who have now been diagnosed with a new and controversial diagnosis – Childhood Bipolar Disorder.

On Sept. 4, 2007, The New York Times reported that studies in the 1970s and '80s concluded bipolar disorder was rare in children, but between 1994 to 2003, there was an astounding 40-fold increase in the number of children diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

In a 2007 "60 Minutes" episode, Katie Couric focused on the short life of 4-year-old Rebecca Riley of Hull. Diagnosed with bipolar disorder at age 28 months, she was dead one year later from an overdose of a psychotropic drug cocktail. At one point, Couric asks Rebecca's mother, who had been charged with her daughter's murder, if she thought her child's behavior might have been normal. That in fact, maybe little Rebecca was just exhibiting "Terrible 2s" behavior.

On Nov. 19, 2008, the New York Times reported that 31 children who were diagnosed with Childhood Bipolar Disorder and given the drug Risperdal for tantrums died, and 1,176 suffered serious side effects.

Dr. Joseph Biederman, a prominent Harvard child psychiatrist at Massachusetts General Hospital, and his team are more responsible than anyone for a child bipolar epidemic sweeping America (and no other country) that has 2-year-olds on three and four psychiatric drugs.

In a 2008 article, "Are Our Leading Pediatricians Drug Industry Shills?", pediatrician Lawrence Diller states, "The science of children's psychiatric medications is so primitive and Biederman's influence so great that when he merely mentions a drug during a presentation, tens of thousands of children within a year or two will end up taking that drug, or combination of drugs. This happens in the absence of a drug trial of any kind. Instead, the decision is based upon word of mouth among the 7,000 child psychiatrists in America."

A key issue is the misuse of psychiatric diagnostic labels to explain bad behavior in children. This has resulted in the drugging of young children to a degree unprecedented in our history. To diagnose a 2-year-old as bipolar by adult standards is crazy.

The behavior of a 2-year-old is filled with curiosity about everything and anything. Young children have extraordinary ability in terms of emotions and cognitions. They can be very upset very quickly, very angry, very depressed, because their emotions are so fluid, so available.

These behaviors are seldom the result of blood chemistry issues. Instead, parents should view them as a healthy striving toward necessary independence. Growing up is not a condition. Childhood is not a disease. Children act up and defy authority and they need adults to teach them how to manage difficult feelings and handle disappointment appropriately.

There are ways for parents to do this that are quite effective and don't involve drugs, but they do involve parents being teachers. Our preschool children are far too young to defend themselves. It's up to parents to "say no to drugs" and teach their children that life is meant to be learned and experienced it's not just a pill to be swallowed.

Many of the most popular child-rearing books, however, repeatedly urge parents to hold, soothe, comfort, and talk to the child who bites, screams, throws, breaks things, or otherwise behaves in obnoxious, infantile ways.

Children need parents, not pills. Parents need new parenting tools. We have been loving our children into behaving badly and the quick "fix" pills are becoming the easy way out that may have lasting untold psychic damage.

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TwistedSister

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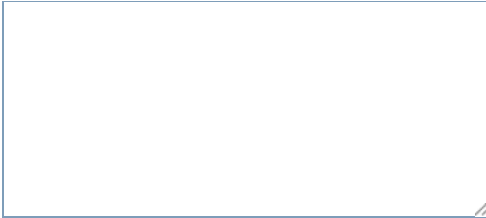
Everyone/anyone who is thinking of having a child needs to read this article. I've been saying for years, to anyone who will listen, how sad it is that parents are much too willing to put their children on drugs at the suggestion of their pediatrician/family doctor without fully realizing the weight of their decision. Wake up everyone. I never knew any kids who were prescribed drugs for being unable to sit still or focus on school work. Those kids were known as hyperactive and there was only a handful of them in all the years I was in school.. They required a little more attention and discipline and miraculously they learned to control themselves and eventually grew out of it. What the hell has happened to our world when almost every child in the classroom is on ADHD drugs? Don't people realize their kids are being turned into drug addicts when, from a very young age when their brains are still developing, they are being prescribed speed? This is all happening at the suggestion of the people we are supposed to trust for advice.....the family doctor. Do you know kids who were diagnosed as bipolar and have problems with addiction now that they are adults? I look around me and I see far too many who have ended up this way. The world has gone crazy.

dmgr

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SOSO TRUE. Parents and doctors need to WAKE UP!!!! I saw this in my niece and nephew-all screwed up as young adults now, when all they needed was discipline and structure.

OFD02125

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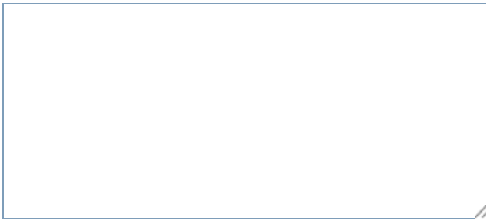
Bipolar Disorder my a\$\$.. It's either about bad parenting or the word got out about that SSI check. Someone should look into how many 'bipolar' children belong to welfare families.

grandboysnana

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For the love of God, parenting means surrendering your own identity for the sake of another human being that you CHOSE to create! High sugar diets, parents too busy with their OWN lives, and the inability to set boundaries and limitations makes for an over-stimulated child!

The 'X' generation is finally rearing its ugly head! Children of the 70's, 80's are unwilling and unsupported in their responsibilities of raising a child. Drugs, technology and a narcissistic attitude have all contributed to this abandonment. Oh, I can hear the thirty-somethings squeal! I WANT, I WANT is their mantra.

Children are not the by-product of your accomplishments. They are your only accomplishment!

Nothing you can do, nothing you earn in the marketplace will replace the satisfaction of a child well reared. They are not a dog, a boat, a fancy car you drive or status home. They are the sum and substance of a life well lived. They will reflect back your values, your significance, and your character.

God help us all.

McGregor

7/13/2010

COMMENTARY: We must stop treating...

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Parenting is very rewarding - if you are willing to put in the time. Time with your children - is a child's greatest gift. The setting of boundaries and reinforcing them is a fundamental. The application of soft love and tough love must be applied with knowledge, understanding and judgement, but when done with consistency, provide much reward. Balance. These developing diagnosis are the manufacturing of well intentioned, but out of touch professionals. I stringly believe all the external counseling, seminars, medical evals, prescriptions, etc that we subscribe to and subsequently indoctrinate our children into, yield marginal results compared to good solid parenting where adequate time is being provided to the children. Agreed on the commentary - childhood is not a disease.

taxpayer\_parent  
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Wow, McGregor - Right on!  
nmcneill  
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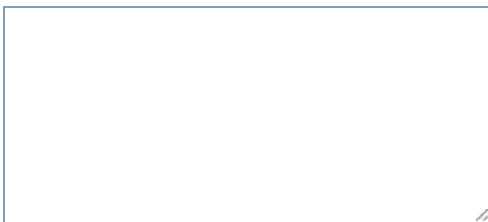
I couldn't agree more with this article, as I've been talking about the same thing with friends and family of mine for years. People want the quick, easy fix, and it's just simply not going to be there.

lulu7898  
23 hours ago  
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I can say with full honesty that I will never have children. I have a long history of mental illness in my family and my husband was adopted from Vietnam and none of his records survived the war. I would not want to bring a child into this world knowing my background and not knowing my husband's background. I have a niece and nephew and they are wonderful. That works for me.

Fed Up With Excuses  
22 hours ago  
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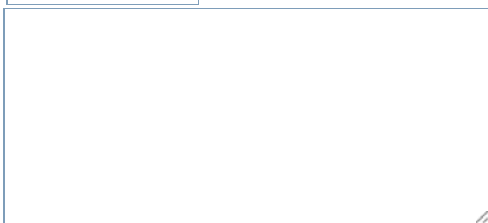
When my children were that age the only 'run away' diagnosis was ADD or ADHD. The immediate response for this diagnosis, of course, was prescription drugs. To administer such drugs as Ritalin must surely have a lasting effect on the still growing brain and body of children. We may never really know what the damages will be. We need to stop trying to mold our babies into something they are not ready for. Let children be children including all the 'normal' growing pains that accompany this stage of life. Children do need to be taught by their parents and parents cannot take a day off from this life-long commitment of raising another human being. Man, if you have a child, you better be ready to be on call 24/7. It is a requirement if you are going to take on this most precious life choice. It's true that there are not life classes on how to parent and may somebody upstairs be watching over you if you had 'absentee' parents. If you did, you were jipped and that saddens me because every child deserves a chance. As parents we must protect our children and sometimes the hard choice is to say no to prescription drugs and outlandish diagnoses. You are the parent. You are in charge. Don't let doctors lead you down the path of confusion. Just because someone has a PhD does not make them all knowing. Our culture has so much to learn in terms of treatment choices. Holistic choices are out there if you are willing to take the time to investigate. I myself said no to three different drug prescriptions when my little boy had reflux. I asked the doctor why he was treating the symptoms instead of the problem and he said that most parents wanted the drugs. He outgrew the condition of reflux but all the while it was an active condition, our entire family supported him and our family. Nobody made a big deal about it and we always urged him to continue on his way after a vomiting episode. It was treated like a hiccup and now when we look back, I'm so grateful that we took the easier way by not medicating him. There have been no lasting effects of the reflux. For 2 and 3 year olds, the only diagnosis any doctor should be treating a child for is a life threatening illness. Let's not medicate the next Einstein because he or she is a little difficult in their growing pains. It will pass.

Imacdo

20 hours ago

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wow-this is sad coming from a clinical psychologist. If your child had diabetes, heart disease, RA, seizures etc. you would gladly give them the medication that allows them to participate fully in life.

Children do have mental illnesses, depression, ADHD etc. and do benefit from medication. Children who don't get treated end up dropping out of school, taking drugs or drinking in an effort to self-medicate and make themselves feel better, or act out in all sorts of ways that society then feels they can punish them for. Better to punish than to prevent. Right?

Think about all the adults you know or someone in your family who can't hold down a job, or has a drinking problem, or has been divorced several times or can't keep track of their bills or have children because they can't remember to use birth control or are too out of it to care or think beyond the moment. Do you think they were happy children who suddenly developed these problems?

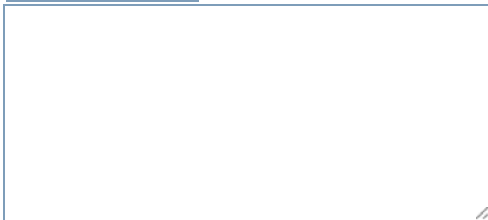
Think about all the kids in special schools who are there because of this type of dribble. I've done protective holds on children who are so out of control that they were a danger to themselves. If a little pill corrects an imbalance and allows a child to be an integrated and functional part of his society. Why would you deny him or her that medication? This attitude prevents parents from providing their children with the help they need because they have bought into this doctor's crap. And the kid then has to go see this doctor every week for the rest of his life with no relief. Who profits from this?

zoey

19 hours ago

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Regarding the commentary by Jacob Azerrad, I whole heartedly agree with him, and can't believe any child of 2 years of age can be diagnosed as bi-polar. Anyone who diagnoses a child of that age, and would give them medication, for a supposed illness, in my opinion, is crazy themselves, and is in dire need of psychiatric help. The Dr. who prescribed med. for that poor child in Hull (I believe her name was Rebecca Riley) who died at the age of 4, and whose parents are now in jail, should be in jail right along side of them. In fact she is supposed to be intelligent, what a joke! I don't think the parents of that child were all there. What is that Dr.'s excuse? And she is still allowed to practice medicine. God help us is right!

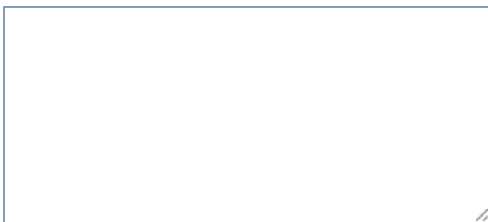
pinkpastelprncss

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I myself suffer from a mental illness and did not start taking any medication till I was 15 years old and still to this day I only take 1 pill, if you let them doctors will over medicate you and you will not be able to function in normal society because of the side effects of all these medications. As I previously read the case on Rebecca Riley they had that 4 year old on Serequel which is an extremely strong sedative if I took one of those I would sleep for 2 days and I am an adult, it sickens me that doctors allow these children to be on these medications because their brains are not even close to developed yet I myself feel they should not be on medications until they are at least teenagers, and these doctors and parents need to realize that.

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