

**STEFAN P. KRUSZEWSKI, M.D.**  
732 Forest Road  
Harrisburg, PA 17112

October 25, 2006

**VIA FAX (202) 307-2825  
AND U.S. MAIL**

Hon. Alberto Gonzales  
Attorney General for the United States  
Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Gonzales:

I am writing this brief letter to you in support of comments to be shared by Lisa Van Syckel and her attorney, Derek T. Braslow. It is my understanding that you will be meeting with them so they can share their concerns to you regarding the use of antidepressants and the potential for violence. For my part, I write to you as a concerned Princeton and Harvard-trained Board-certified psychiatrist. Importantly, as an advocate for patient rights, clinical research transparency, recognition of conflicts of interest in academic and clinical medicine and the judicious use of psychotropic medications across all age groups, I am otherwise a mainstream psychiatric practitioner. Although vocal and a member of numerous organizations that represent these varied concerns, including the American Psychiatric Association, the comments I share are my own.

On 17 October 2006, Derek Braslow faxed you a letter regarding "Lisa Van Syckel meeting on antidepressants and school violence." In my brief remarks, I would like to make two comments in support of that letter. I believe that these comments are timely and represent critical issues facing not only neuropsychiatric medicine but all venues of medicine including those unrelated to psychiatry.

In 2004, all antidepressants were mandated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to contain black box warnings regarding the potential for suicidal risks. I was present in Bethesda in the second of two advisory committee meetings to advocate for this labeling change. It is my opinion that the labeling change was essential because, prior to it, some of the risks associated with antidepressants had not been recognized. This non-transparency is one of two compelling reasons that I write this letter to you. Neither patients nor physicians can accurately assess the risks and benefits of any medicine, including the significant risks associated with antidepressant medications, unless the pharmaceutical manufacturers of those medications and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration work together to ensure that all information is transparent and readily

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available. This begets the issue discovered by New York Attorney General Elliot Spitzer in his discovery regarding suppression of data in regard to Paxil. In brief, in your position as the most authoritative spokesperson for American jurisprudence, you must share the opinion that informed decision-making, consent and prescribing can only occur when all information pertaining to a pharmaceutical is available and can be understood and communicated in a readily open manner.

In the 17 October letter by Derek Braslow, he elaborated 13 cases where antidepressants emerged as a possible associative or causative agent in the induction of violence and aggression. This is also a significantly important matter. Although no scientist could confirm, based upon baker's dozen case histories, an epidemiologically-based and statistically valid causal relationship between these 13 cases and the resultant violence, there is a neurobiochemical explanation that underscores the association between antidepressant medication and the risk of activation and aggressive acting out, including homicide. This information, in fact, would satisfy the Daubert rules re production of evidence since it is based upon a substantial and accepted peer-reviewed scientific literature that underscores the pharmacodynamics, pharmacokinetics and psychophysiological sequelae of antidepressant treatment. In other words, it is my opinion, one shared by others but minimized by manufacturers of antidepressants, that these drugs can increase the risk of suicide and, moreover, due to predictable neurochemical changes in the human central nervous system, increase the risk of violence and aggressive acting out. It is also my opinion that the public, including the physicians who prescribe these medicines, have not been adequately warned about this risk.

In any time in the future, I would be happy to speak to you about these issues in any platform that you believe might be helpful to explain the risk/benefit profile of this class of drugs. Separately, I have included my contact information. I am ready and able to articulate these problems in any forum helpful to the U.S. Department of Justice.

Sincerely,

Stefan P. Kruszewski, M.D.

cc: Derek T. Braslow, Esq.  
Pogust & Braslow, LLC  
161 Washington Street, Suite 1520  
Conshohocken, PA 19428

Lisa Van Syckel