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Mental Health (Jersey) Law 1969: Reform : Consultant's Report and Proposals, Jersey (Channel Islands). States. Public Health Committee, States of Jersey, 1992, 0950199540, 9780950199542, . .

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Is it the case, as demonstrated in a TV documentary, that multi-national corporations and not governments now control the world? Are powerful and influential psychiatrists who work within the Mental Health Movement linked to the multi-national corporations that now dominate and control medical and research institutions and whose life-blood is profit? (Politics isn't working: the End of Politics. Cambridge academic Noreena Hertz presented evidence that multi-national corporations are taking the place of elected governments. ITV Channel 4, 13th May 2001)

In the UK, patients with myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME, also known as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome or CFS), particularly children, have suffered gross and barbaric abuse and persistent denigration as a consequence of the beliefs of certain psychiatrists who are attempting to control the national agenda for this complex and severe neuro-immunological disorder

These psychiatrists are shown to be clearly in breach of the first tenet of medicine --- first do no harm--- in that by their words and deeds they have wreaked havoc in the lives of ME/CFS patients and their families by their arrogant pursuit of a psychiatric construct of the disorder which ignores the abundant clinical and scientific evidence (widely presented in the international medical and scientific literature) of the organic nature of ME/CFS

To the serious disadvantage of patients, these psychiatrists have propagated untruths and falsehoods about the disorder to the medical, legal, insurance and media communities, as well as to Government Ministers and to Members of Parliament, resulting in the withdrawal and erosion of both social and financial support

Influenced by these psychiatrists, Government bodies such as the Medical Research Council have continued to propagate the same falsehoods with the result that patients are left without any hope of understanding or of health service provision or delivery. As a consequence, Government funding into the biomedical aspects of the disorder is non-existent

This coterie of psychiatrists has proven affiliations with corporate industry and has insidiously infiltrated all the major institutions, directing funding for research into an exclusively psychiatric model of the disorder, focusing on "management strategies" involving psychiatric techniques, even though such techniques have been shown to be at best of no lasting value and at worst to be harmful to patients with ME/CFS

ME has been formally classified by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) as a neurological disorder since 1969, but psychiatrist Simon Wessely advises Government that the disorder does not exist other than as an “aberrant belief” that one has a disorder called ME. He refers to “chronic fatigue syndrome” (CFS) and asserts that CFS is a somatoform (psychiatric) disorder in which patients produce physical symptoms as a means of expressing emotional distress.

This is at variance with the WHO classification of the disorder: Chronic Fatigue Syndrome is listed in the ICD as a term by which ME is also known and according to the ICD, the two terms are synonymous, thus “CFS” does not represent a psychiatric disorder even though Wessely School psychiatrists assert that it does.

Of potential significance is the fact that American researchers have demonstrated that in ME/CFS, a particular pathway in the body which is affected by viruses can also be affected by chemicals and it is known that ME/CFS can be either virally or chemically induced (Interferon-induced proteins are elevated in blood samples of patients with chemically or virally induced chronic fatigue syndrome. Vojdani A; Lapp CW. *Immunopharmacol Immunotoxicol* 1999;21: (2):175-202)

For at least a decade, questions about possible scientific misconduct and flawed methodology by Dr (now Professor) Wessely and his group of co-psychiatrists have been raised and published in international medical journals but it is only relatively recently that his long-time involvement as medical adviser to commercial bodies having a vested interest in his publications on ME has been exposed (see below).

There is no question that many millions of pounds sterling are at stake and that the vested interest groups for whom these psychiatrists act as medical advisers would like to prevent insurance cover for ME patients (those with a psychiatric label are denied medical insurance cover); prevent disability payments to them; prevent successful liability lawsuits and maintain the supremacy of their industries (see below).

“I suspect that psychiatry, if it is not careful, will eventually become most ridiculed over its adherence to one theme: that of ‘somatization’. Presently, sufferers of Myalgic Encephalitis (sic) (also called Chronic Fatigue Syndrome) are increasingly subject to medical negligence or even abuse because the huge body of international bio-medical evidence is ignored, especially in Britain, in favour of an unfortunately incomprehensible, incoherent and empirically inadequate theory.

“The categorization of an illness as being psychosomatic also means a further categorisation of an individual as ‘deviant’ rather than ‘ill’, so that they are denied sympathy, support, and even benefits they are entitled to. Categorised as ‘deviant’, the ill then suffer increasing social exclusion and material inequalities.

“The material effects of such sloppy ‘science’ have had two main consequences for ME sufferers: firstly, the medical impairments of the illness have often been ignored and left untreated, and many sufferers therefore become severely disabled, their physical health absolutely devastated and their chances of a restoration to good health uncertain at best. Secondly, children in particular end up victims of institutional abuse (though this can happen to adults too). In the case of children, they may be forcibly removed from their concerned parents and subjected to draconian ‘treatments’ that could, quite easily, be termed abuse.

“The capacity for abuse of institutional power appears to have increased enormously, and this is becoming most evident in the fields of health care and particularly psychiatry. How such problems are addressed will determine the future of such disciplines, as far-reaching demands for justice from those who are faced with or survive such institutional abuse are inevitable, and this will lead to a critical review of medical practice, both from other disciplines, and society at large”.

In 21st century medicine the Mental Health Movement is politically correct and immensely powerful: it is backed by the giant chemical, pharmaceutical and insurance industries which are now the

fundings and controllers of both undergraduate and post-graduate medical education. In the UK, these industries have known links to research funding bodies such as the Medical Research Council (MRC) and as a result, a vast amount of public money is presently being provided in an attempt to strengthen the currently weak psychiatrically-driven research evidence that behaviour-modifying “chronic illness management strategies” are effective.

Also relevant may be the Council of Europe Strasbourg Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine, which confers rights including provision for drug and other medical trials on human beings which in certain circumstances could be carried out without the individual’s consent: this applies to three groups of people in particular:

Concurrently, in the UK, proposals for the Reform of the Mental Health Act were drawn so widely that they would give psychiatrists far greater powers to enforce compulsory psychiatric treatment upon both adults and children: proposals included provision for psychiatrists to be able to drug people (including children against the wishes of their parents) if they have “any disability or disorder of the mind or brain, whether permanent or temporary, which results in an impairment of mental functioning”.

Mental Health Movement advocates claim that disorders such as ME and CFS come into what they call the “medically unexplained symptoms” category (known as MUS or MUPS, which stands for “medically unexplained physical symptoms”) and that such disorders are psychogenic in origin; contrary to established principles of scientific investigation and discovery, these psychiatrists assert that “if all you look for are biomedical explanations, you’re missing the whole picture” and that if Government wants to solve the waiting-list dilemma (which it does, for political reasons), “they will have to channel serious money at this problem” by funding psychiatric management regimes (<http://www.thes.co.uk/search/story.aspx>). The implications of the implementation of this policy are already spiralling out of control.

On 4th May 2000, a letter from the Office of the Minister of State at the Department of Health (signed by John Hutton) seemed not to rule out the re-classification of ME/CFS as a “mental” disorder, stating it was unlikely that the proposed reforms to the Mental Health Act would affect such patients (quote) “even if (ME/CFS) were reclassified as a mental rather than a physical disorder”.

In October 1999 Dr Michael Sharpe (a psychiatrist and prominent member of the Wessely School) gave a lecture at the University of Strathclyde at which he said: “Purchasers and health care providers with hard-pressed budgets are understandably reluctant to spend money on patients who are not going to die and for whom there is controversy about the ‘reality’ of their condition (and who) are undeserving of treatment”.

“One of the strangest aspects of modern politics is the dominance of former left-wingers who have swung to the right. The “neo-cons” pretty well run the White House and the Pentagon, the (UK) Labour party and key departments of the British government. But there is a group which has travelled even further to the extremities of the pro-corporate right. Its tactics (involve) entering organisations and taking them over. Research published for the first time today suggests that members of this group have colonised a crucial section of the British establishment. The organisation began in the late 1970s as a Trotskyist splinter; it immediately set out to destroy competing oppositional movements. In 1988 it set up a magazine called Living Marxism (known as) LM. By this time it had moved to the far right and was led by the academic Frank Furedi who started writing for the Centre for Policy Studies (founded by Keith Joseph and Margaret Thatcher) and who contacted the supermarket chains, offering, for £7,500, to educate their customers ‘about complex scientific issues’. In the late 1990s the group started infiltrating the media, with remarkable success. In 2000, LM was sued by ITN after falsely claiming that (its) news journalists had fabricated evidence of Serb atrocities against Bosnian Muslims. LM closed, and was resurrected as the web magazine Spiked.

“All this is already in the public domain. But now, thanks to the work of researcher Jonathan Matthews, what seems to be a new front in this group’s campaign has come to light. Its participants

have taken on key roles in the formal infrastructure of public communication used by the science and medical establishment.

“(One of its participants) is Fiona Fox, who is the director of the Science Media Centre (which) is funded, amongst others, by the pharmaceutical companies Astra Zeneca, Dupont and Pfizer. Fox has used the Science Media Centre to promote the views of industry and to launch fierce attacks against those who question them.

“Are we looking at a group which wants power for its own sake, or one following a political design? The scientific establishment appears unwittingly to have permitted its interests to be represented to the public by the members of a bizarre and cultish political network. Far from rebuilding public trust in science and medicine, this group’s repugnant philosophy could finally destroy it”.

Of significance to the ME community is the fact that Spiked’s health writer is Dr Michael Fitzpatrick, well-known for presenting and promoting the views of Professor Simon Wessely and for his perverse and immoderate attacks on those with ME. One such article can be found at <http://www.spiked-online.com/Articles/00000002D3B6.htm> (SPIKED: Health: 17th January 2002: “ME: the making of a new disease”). Referring to the then newly published Chief Medical Officer’s Working Group report on CFS/ME (see text), Fitzpatrick roundly derided the CMO, Professor Liam Donaldson: “The CFS/ME compromise reflects a surrender of medical authority to irrationality. The scale of this capitulation is apparent when Professor Donaldson claims that CFS/ME should be classified together with conditions such as multiple sclerosis and motor neurone disease. The effectiveness of the ME lobby reflects its middle-class base.”

Information on the GMWATCH website (www.gmwatch.org) is also important to the ME community. By 2003, Lord Sainsbury had donated over £11 million to the Labour Party. Mark Seddon, a member of Labour’s National Executive Committee, told the BBC “In any other country, I think a government minister donating such vast amounts of money and effectively buying a political party would be seen for what it is, a form of corruption of the political process”.

In a recent Financial Times article, Lord Sainsbury cites the following statistics: British universities spun off 199 companies in 2000, up from an annual average of 67 in the previous five years. The UK’s ratio of companies to research spending is now more than six times higher than the US. “It’s a dazzling record”, Lord Sainsbury is quoted as saying.

Not everyone shares Sainsbury’s enthusiasm. Professor Stephen Rose of the Open University Biology Department is among those who have commented critically on this emerging corporate science culture: “The whole climate of what might be open and independent scientific research has disappeared”.

The problem is that the Mental Health Movement does not restrict itself to mental disorders and ME has been the subject of unremitting psychiatric spin since the late 1980s: although ME is not classified by the WHO in the ICD as “mental”, in the UK it is being high-jacked and covertly re-classified as “mental” by a small but influential group of psychiatrists known colloquially as the “Wessely School” (Hansard: Lords: 19th December 1998:1013 – see below) who have their own vested interests in casting their net of illness control ever wider. They have proposed a hypothetical model that cannot be tested experimentally and it is this group of psychiatrists who are the most assiduous advocates of the Mental Health Movement in the UK, to the extent that, in the case of ME, they have been shown to have created their own conclusions before generating the data which would support such conclusions.

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