



Has Psychotherapy Taken A Back Seat To Medication?

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SOURCE American Psychological Association

APA Launches New Initiative to Educate Consumers about Treatment Options for Depression

WASHINGTON, Sept. 24, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- Even though countless studies show that psychotherapy helps people living with depression and anxiety, drug therapy has become the most popular course of treatment over the past decade. The American Psychological Association (APA) is hoping to balance that trend with an initiative launched today that will educate consumers about psychotherapy's effectiveness and encourage them to ask their physicians about it as a treatment option.

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"We get a lot of information about drug therapy from commercials and pop culture, but we hear much less about the alternatives," said Katherine Nordal, PhD, executive director of professional practice at APA. "Mental illness and depression get a lot of attention during October and that gives us a good opportunity to highlight the benefits of psychotherapy for these disorders. While medication can be an appropriate part of treatment, people should know that psychotherapy works!"

APA is introducing an animated video series about a fictional miracle drug called "Fixitol." The videos are a parody on drug ads, drawing attention to the value of psychotherapy as a treatment option. The Association is also providing resources on depression, how psychotherapy works and how to talk to your physician about getting started.

"Hundreds of studies have found that psychotherapy is an effective way to help people make positive changes in their lives. Compared with medication, psychotherapy has fewer side effects and lower instances of relapse when discontinued," Dr. Nordal said. "We hope that, with the right information, more people with depression will explore their treatment options to create a plan that gives them the skills they need to manage their condition."

Depression is one of the most common mental health disorders in America. According to U.S. government health agencies an estimated one in ten adults report having depression. Mental health problems lead to more than 150 million visits to doctors' offices, clinics and hospital outpatient departments each year, making it one of the top three reasons why Americans seek medical treatment. Between 1996 and 2008, the number of prescriptions for antidepressants more than doubled from 55.9 million to 154.7 million.

APA encourages people experiencing depression, stress or anxiety to ask their health care providers about psychotherapy when discussing treatment options. Psychotherapy provides a supportive environment that allows patients to talk openly about their personal health and emotional situations and gives patients skills and tools to manage stress, depression and anxiety over the long term.

Mental Illness Awareness Week and National Depression Screening Day are observed during the

second week of October. Visit www.apa.org/psychotherapy to learn how psychotherapy can help in treating depression and watch the video series, *Psychotherapy: More Than a Quick Fix*. Join the conversation about psychotherapy on Twitter (@apahelpcenter), use hashtag #therapyworks.

The American Psychological Association, in Washington, D.C., is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and is the world's largest association of psychologists. APA's membership includes more than 137,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students. Through its divisions in 54 subfields of psychology and affiliations with 60 state, territorial and Canadian provincial associations, APA works to advance psychology as a science, as a profession and as a means of promoting health, education and human welfare.

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