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## SUMMARY

Depression is seen as a national disease, curable by 'evidence-based' health care – in Finland, the Current Care Guidelines (Käypä hoito in Finnish) for the treatment of depression. The recent 20 years have seen a tenfold increase in the medication of the depressed according to these guidelines. However, this has not decreased the number of people ending up on disability pension.

The pharmaceutical industry influences all aspects of health policy, from the formulation of diagnostic criteria to the definition of "evidence-based" care instructions, research and its publication or non-publication. Medical journals can no more be trusted, as they publish articles ghostwritten by public relations departments of pharmaceutical companies. Moreover, pharmaceutical industry finances these journals with commercials, reprints and supplements, which results in their pages filling with outright propaganda.

New SSRI and SNRI antidepressants, which increase the levels of serotonin and other neurotransmitters in the brain, roused a pill fever, leading to the medication of multifarious pretend depressions, symptoms similar to depression and new, fictitious illnesses. In present-day Finland, these products, initially regarded as precision drugs for melancholy, are available for over 20 different diagnoses. They are not even biochemically selective, let alone affecting a specific "depression centre" in the brain. These "precision products" have proven to be equally ineffective as placebos, which was only exposed when the research results on their almost non-existent impact, previously hidden by the industry, were made public. The research frame of clinical antidepressant trials is skew from the start, since the trials are carried out as placebo-controlled studies. The lack of side effects betrays the use of inert placebos to most testees. In addition, the actual trial is preceded by a so-called placebo washout phase, where placebo responders are excluded from the testee group. The actual research only concentrates on the patients' response, or the minor change in HAMD depression scores in comparison with the placebo group – not on the actual remission from depression.

The monoamine hypothesis, basis for "happiness pills", has long proven scientifically wrong, but the propaganda of pill firms still lives strongly in the media, patient guides and even in so called expert speeches. According to some health experts connected to the pharmaceutical industry, the chemical unbalan-

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ce of the brain makes a good metaphor, even if it is scientific nonsense.

The brainification of psychiatry is connected to the neoconservative and neoliberal set of values, which prevails especially in the USA. The diagnostic lists and so called evidence based treatment guidelines of *American Psychiatric Association APA*, whose doctors have ties to pharmaceutical companies, have also been adopted in Europe. These documents are written in seminars and other think tank meetings supported by the pharma industry. The standardization of treatment and its reduction to a minimum procedure carried out in the primary health care system, usually by medication, is the shared mission of neoliberal New Public Management and the pharma industry in the name of "increased efficiency".

The introduction of evidence-based medicine is a noble and good attempt to distinguish the effective ways of treatment from others, but in the current system, where both diseases and treatments are defined by the pharmaceutical industry, it results in ineffective and expensive "medication machines". It is thus no wonder that healthcare expenses are on constant rise, despite the fact that people are healthier than ever – and the number of clinical depression patients has hardly increased. The Finnish current care guidelines are written by the experts of Finnish Medical Society Duodecim, who are in close contact with the pharmaceutical industry, and are based on American medication guidelines. Even though many Finnish experts work for the National Institute for Health and Welfare THL, they too are strongly within the pharmaceutical industry's sphere of influence – for instance the father of current care guidelines for depression, professor *Erkki Isometsä*, has long relations with at least ten pharmaceutical companies. THL's number one depression expert, professor *Jouko Lönnqvist*, is also linked to these companies and has worked as a scientific advisor for the American pharmaceutical industry's dummy foundation *American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, AFSP* for several years. He has also received the AFSP research award for his long-term research on suicide-related genetic features and brain functions.

All of this leads to increase in depression diagnoses and diagnoses of depression-related illnesses, which are then "treated" with pills with a verified placebo effect. This makes no sense from the perspective of national economy and public health.