

What society's appointed experts/authorities say depression is

- * Depression is a medical illness
- * Depression is a (medical) disease
- * Depression is a leading cause of disability and burden of disease globally
- * Depression is a mental illness
- * Depression is a mental disorder
- * Depression is a mood disorder
- * Depression is a biological – and therefore medical – illness
- * Depression is a brain disease/brain disorder
- * Depression is a brain chemical imbalance
- * Depression is a genetic – and therefore medical - illness
- * Depression is a medical illness just like diabetes
- * Depression can be endogenous or reactive
- * There is no cure for depression

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As we saw in Module Two of this course

YOU HAVE LIKELY REPEATEDLY HEARD
FROM A WIDE RANGE OF SOURCES



Assertions as to the known presence of brain chemical imbalances regarding depression

Repeatedly made by apparently reputable/credible sources

For more than 40 years

Continue to be made to this day

The truth

No brain
chemical
imbalances



Ever
identified



In
depression

Mass delusion:

VOCIFEROUSLY EMPHASISED > 40 YEARS



- ✘ Brain chemical imbalances are known to occur in depression ✘
- ✘ These brain chemical imbalances probably cause depression ✘

THESE ASSERTIONS
ALL OTHER RELATED ASSERTIONS



Falsehoods/untruths

Before any claims of chemical imbalances should be made

AN ACTUAL EXISTING CHEMICAL IMBALANCE



Has to have been established/scientifically verified

This is the case for all scientifically verified chemical imbalance medical diseases

FOR EXAMPLE



Diabetes
Hypothyroidism
Menopause

Dwarfism
Addison's disease
Etc

Depression: No existing chemical imbalance identified/scientifically verified

Before any claims of chemical imbalances should be made

THE “NORMAL”/“HEALTHY RANGE OF THE SAID CHEMICAL



Has to have been established/scientifically verified

Scientifically verified “normal” range/results

PREREQUISITE



Scientifically verified “abnormal” ranges/results

This is the case for all scientifically verified chemical imbalance medical diseases

FOR EXAMPLE



Diabetes	Addison’s Disease
Hypothyroidism	Menopause
Dwarfism	Etc

Depression: No “normal” range identified/scientifically identified for any brain chemical

Before any claims of chemical imbalances should be made

LABORATORY TESTS/INVESTIGATIONS
ACCURATE/RELIABLE/TRUSTWORTHY



Have to have been established and scientifically verified

This is the case for all scientifically verified medical chemical imbalance diseases

E.G.

Diabetes
Hypothyroidism
Dwarfism

Addison's Disease
Menopause
Etc

Depression: No such tests/investigations exist, so none carried out

“Normal” levels of brain chemicals – not a clue

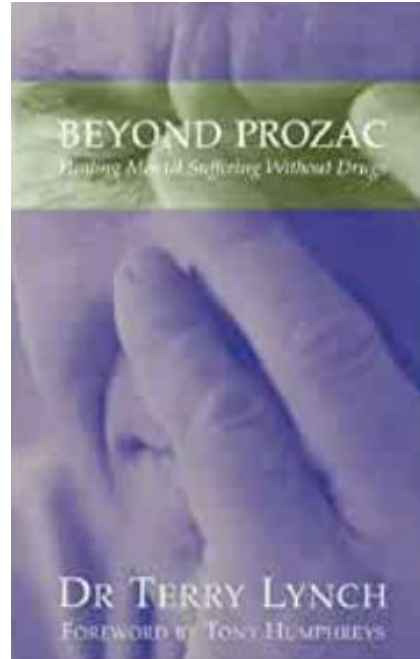
THEREFORE



No place—in science/reasoning—for assumptions re “abnormal” levels of such chemicals

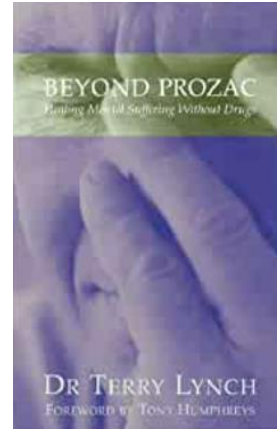
I had realised this

BY LATE 1990s



2001

“But Doctor, where does my Depression go every Wednesday?”



“The doctor (her GP) spent a great deal of time explaining the prevailing view to ‘Joan’:

That it (‘depression’) is caused by a brain (chemical) imbalance
which is corrected by taking antidepressant drugs.

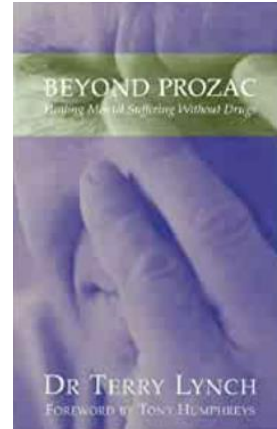
The GP was insistent.

Exasperated, Joan said,

‘If my depression is caused by a biochemical brain imbalance,
then, where does my depression go every Wednesday, Doctor?’”

Dr. Terry Lynch, “Beyond Prozac”, 2001, Marino Books, Cork, p. 113-4.

“But Doctor, where does my Depression go every Wednesday?”



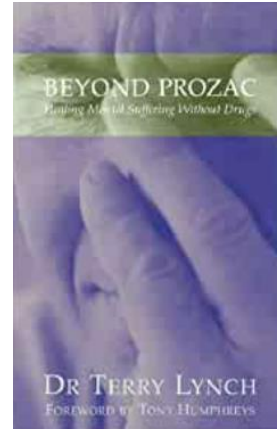
“The GP stopped in his tracks.

‘What do you mean?’, he asked.

Joan repeated, ‘If my depression is due to a chemical imbalance, why am I never depressed on Wednesdays?’

The doctor asked Joan if there was something she did on Wednesdays that made her feel better.”

“But Doctor, where does my Depression go every Wednesday?”



“Joan already knew the answer to her own question.

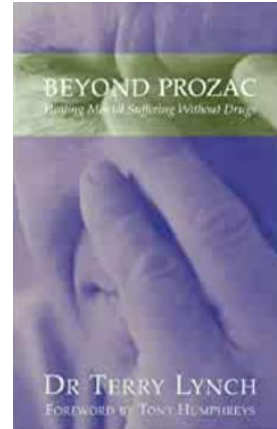
She had a wonderful relationship with her counsellor.

That hour every week was like gold to her.

She felt safe, she felt loved, every Wednesday, so she did not feel depressed.

The doctor admitted that her version made sense.”

“But Doctor, where does my Depression go every Wednesday?”

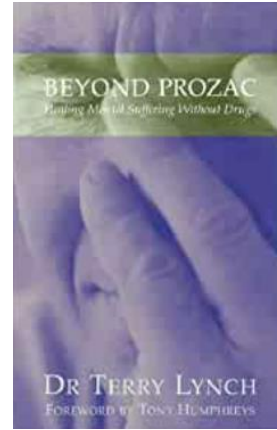


“Little wonder that the GP was knocked off his stride.

In one fell swoop, Joan – a mere patient – exploded the medical profession’s fondly held theory about depression being caused by a biochemical imbalance.

How could a biochemical imbalance revert to normal on Wednesday and suddenly become abnormal again the next day?”

“But Doctor, where does my Depression go every Wednesday?”



“He had no answer to her common sense.
In fairness to the GP, at the end of the consultation
he said that they had both learned something.


He was half-right.

He had certainly learned something.

Joan was the teacher;

The doctor was the pupil.”

SSRI ads questioned

Colin Meek 

CMAJ March 14, 2006 174 (6) 754-754-a; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.051634>

In 2003, Ireland's drug regulator banned GSK from stating on its patient information leaflet that paroxetine „works by bringing serotonin levels back to normal.” Officials stated that „There is no scientific investigation to measure what are normal serotonin levels in the human brain receptors. As such, claiming that a particular medicinal product works by bringing serotonin levels back to normal is not accurate.”



IRISH MEDICINES BOARD

Re Seroxat (Paxil) patient information leaflet:

“The Irish Medicines Board has been reviewing this matter with its experts for some time, and is in agreement that the statement that SSRIs ‘work by bringing the levels of serotonin back to normal’ is not consistent with the literature.

The company has been asked to review the patient information leaflet accordingly.
Thank you for your interest in this matter.”

Letter from Irish Medicines Board to me, November 2002.

Chemical imbalances occur in “mental illnesses”



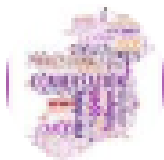
RCSI
@RCSI_Irl

FALSE INFORMATION

Follow

mental health difficulties are chemical imbalances in your brain - its not as simple as saying 'Im not feeling great' #RCSIMiniMed

8:28 PM - 29 Oct 2014



Talla Trialogue @TallaTrialogue · 29 Oct 2014

Replying to @RCSI_Irl

@RCSI_Irl Simply untrue Helen Coughlan #RCSIMiniMed youtu.be/IV1S5zw096U
Joanna @JoannaMoncrieff Psychiatrist 'Myth of Chemical Cure'



James Moore @jf_moore · 9 Jul 2017

Replying to @RCSI_Irl

.@DrTerryLynch @ClinpsychLucy words fail me, it's unethical for professional bodies to be making statements about chemical imbalances #myth



Royal College of Psychiatrists ✓

@rcpsych



Hi there, the old idea that ADs correct a chemical imbalance in the brain is an over-simplification and we do not support this view - CP



@HD-Counselling @HDCounselling · Aug 1, 2017

Replying to @rcpsych

Q: What is the evidence that depression is due to a 'chemical imbalance' in the brain? I have clients who believe this. #ADsMythBuster

(2) Royal College of Psychiatrists on Twitter: "Hi there, the old idea that ADs correct a chemical imbalance in the brain is an over-simplification and we do not support this view - CP <https://t.co/hUrD11O0PF>" /

Twitter



Royal College of Psychiatrists 

@rcpsych



'ADs don't correct a chemical imbalance in the brain' - this criticism of ADs comes from old belief that depression due to low levels of 5HT and/or low adrenaline in the brain.

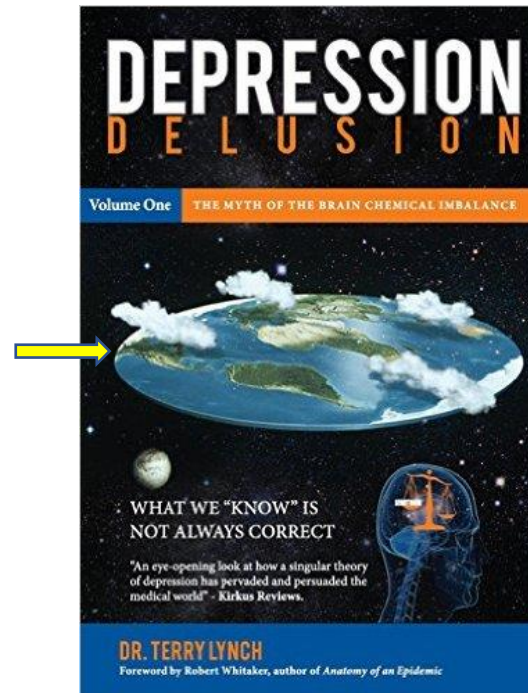
9:12 AM · Jun 27, 2018

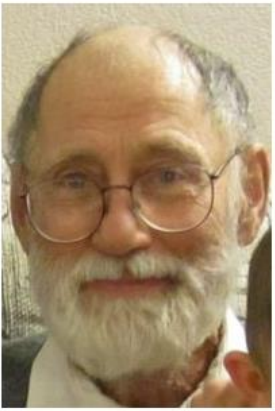
(2) Royal College of Psychiatrists on Twitter: "ADs don't correct a chemical imbalance in the brain' - this criticism of ADs comes from old belief that depression due to low levels of 5HT and/or low adrenaline in the brain. We now have a more nuanced view and understand there are a range of factors @HamishMcAW #rcpsychic" / Twitter

2015

PUBLISHED AN ENTIRE BOOK

“Depression Delusion: The Myth of the Brain Chemical Imbalance”





Book Review: *Depression Delusion* by Terry Lynch, MD, MA

By **Philip Hickey, PhD** - August 31, 2015

In this truly remarkable — and meticulously researched — volume, Dr. Lynch annihilates psychiatry's cherished chemical imbalance theory of depression. Every facet of this theory, which the author correctly calls a delusion, is critically analyzed and found wanting. Example after example is provided of psychiatrists promoting this fiction, the factual and logical errors of which are clearly exposed in Dr. Lynch's lucid, seamless, and highly readable prose.

Pharma-psychiatry's chemical imbalance theory of depression is one of the biggest and most destructive hoaxes in human history. Dr. Lynch's *Depression Delusion* might well be the work that finally lays this hoax to rest, and exposes the self-serving deceptiveness that has become a routine part of psychiatry's endeavors.

[Book Review: Depression Delusion by Terry Lynch, MD, MA - Mad In America](#)



Robert Whitaker

American journalist and author

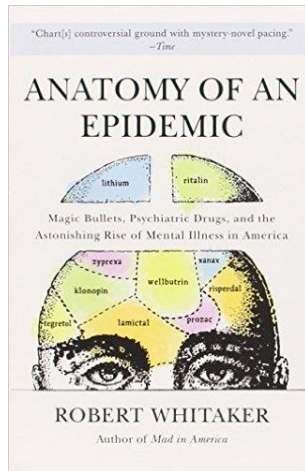
Finalist for the 1999 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service

1998 National Association of Science Writers' Science in Society Journalism Award for best magazine article

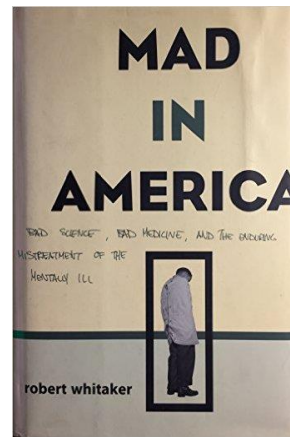
Terry Lynch provides an exhaustive, and even encyclopedic, review of this story in *The Depression Delusion*. He has combed through textbooks, media reports, educational brochures, websites and so forth to document, in extraordinary detail, the telling of this false story, with those making the claim often seen, by the public, as leading “experts” in this field. At the same time, he provides a thorough record of how a number of scientists, for the past 30 years, have been telling us that the story is false and that the science doesn’t add up.

Yet, and this is the amazing thing, it is the false story that took hold in the public mind, rather than the scientific one that told of a hypothesis that doesn’t pan out.

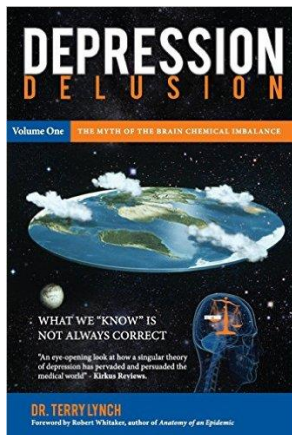
Robert Whitaker, in his Foreword to *Depression Delusion: The Myth of the Brain Chemical Imbalance* (2015)



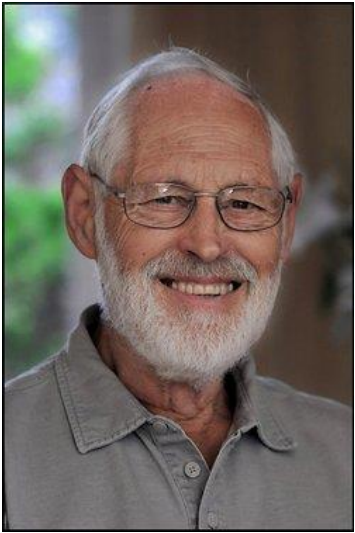
2010



2001



2015

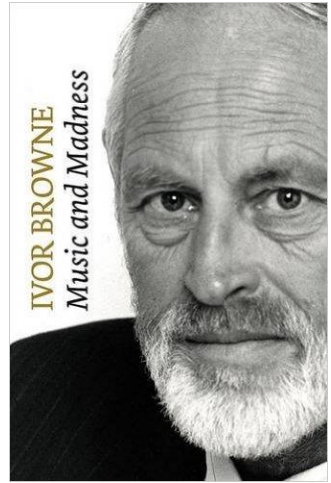


Professor Ivor Browne

Irish psychiatrist

FORMERLY

Professor of Psychiatry



The idea that there is a chemically mediated form of depression which is an “illness”, quite separate from the sadness and depression which are part of the slings and arrows of ordinary life, is manifest nonsense.”



Dr. Muiris Houston

Irish GP

Irish Times medical correspondent

"Depression, in my view, is no different from diabetes.

In one you take insulin

and in the other you take Prozac or some other antidepressant.

✗ → Both substances are simply designed to replace natural chemicals missing from the body" ✗

↪ Manifest nonsense



Dr. Tim Cantopher

British psychiatrist

PRIORY

theguardian

“Antidepressants do work, but only for real clinical depression,
✗ the type involving a chemical imbalance in the brain”. ✗

Manifest nonsense

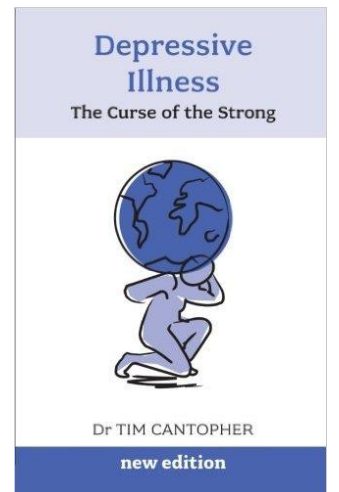
Dr. Tim Cantopher, in *The Guardian* special report on antidepressants, *The Guardian*,
21 November 2013.



Dr. Tim Cantopher

British psychiatrist

PRIORY



“If I were to perform a lumbar puncture on my patients,
(which, new patients of mine will be pleased to hear, I don’t),

I would be able to demonstrate

in the chemical analysis of the cerebro-spinal fluid

(the fluid around the brain and spine),

✗ a deficiency of two chemicals”. ✗

Manifest nonsense



Dr. Dawn Harper

British GP



Depression



“Is very much a chemical illness.

The reason that antidepressants work
is that we know that

✗ they alter the chemicals in the brain and rebalance them”. ✗

Manifest nonsense

Dr. Dawn Harper, medical expert on ITV's *This Morning*,
during a discussion on depression on 12 August 2014.

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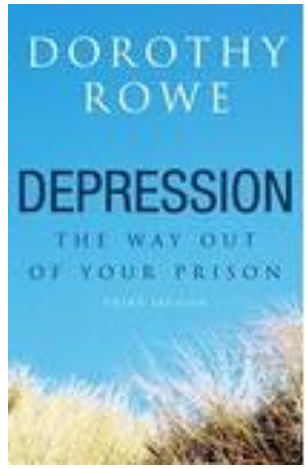
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Dorothy Rowe

The psychologist who has changed how we understand ourselves

The Real Causes of Depression (February 2007)



How many times have you heard it said, 'Depression is caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain'? If you've been depressed and consulted a doctor it's very likely you've been told this in tones of absolute certainty.

If you've been prescribed one of the SSRI antidepressants like Prozac or Sexoxat you were probably told that this drug would replace the serotonin that was missing from your brain.

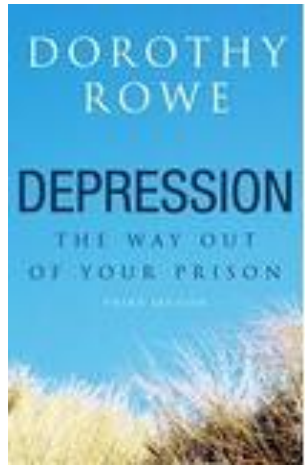
[The Real Causes of Depression \(February 2007\) \(dorothyrowe.com.au\)](http://dorothyrowe.com.au)



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The psychologist who has changed how we understand ourselves

The Real Causes of Depression (February 2007)



There never has been any evidence that any brain chemical was depleted when a person was depressed.

However, psychiatrists kept hoping that one day their hypothesis that depression was caused by a chemical imbalance would be proved to be right.

Now, thirty years after the hypothesis was first produced, the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the Institute of Psychiatry have accepted that depression isn't caused by a chemical imbalance.

But you'll find this out only if you visit their websites. They haven't issued a press release saying, 'We were wrong.'

The website of the Royal College of Psychiatrists has dropped all references to chemical imbalance causing depression.

[The Real Causes of Depression \(February 2007\) \(dorothyrowe.com.au\)](http://dorothyrowe.com.au)



A Decisive Blow to the Serotonin Hypothesis of Depression

Christopher Lane Ph.D.

An exhaustive new review debunks the “chemical imbalance” theory of depression.

Posted July 19, 2022 |  Reviewed by Vanessa Lancaster

KEY POINTS

- Surveys indicate that 85-90 percent of the public believes low serotonin or a chemical imbalance causes depression.
- Among 237 psychology students interviewed, 46 percent had heard the chemical imbalance explanation from a physician.

Andrew Gregory
Health editor

 @andrewgregory

Wed 20 Jul 2022 12.49
CEST

Little evidence that chemical imbalance causes depression, UCL scientists find

In the new analysis, researchers said 85% to 90% of the public believed depression was caused by low serotonin or a chemical imbalance.

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