

Depression is a psychological affliction that is being diagnosed more frequently among children and adults (and more so in women than in men), so much so that it has become "the common cold of mental illness". Each year, twenty million Americans take antidepressants, and each year there is a ten per cent increase in such use. Last year alone, 15 million prescriptions for antidepressants were written for children and teenagers, although the number has decreased since the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) sanctioned the new "black box" warning labels, cautioning that antidepressants can increase suicidal thoughts and behaviour among children. For some people these antidepressants can function as a blessing, allowing them to regain control and functionality in their lives.

In her response to Tom Cruise's categorical condemnation of psychiatric drug use, actress Brooke Shields defended her use of the drug Paxil while battling postpartum depression, revealing that at one point while suffering from the potentially debilitating affliction, she contemplated driving her car into a wall with her infant daughter in the backseat. She attributes her recovery to taking Paxil and to weekly therapy sessions.

There are millions of women who can relate to her story, and millions who have been successfully treated with the use of antidepressants. Indeed, depression can at times be so incapacitating that medication is needed in order to render it controllable so that therapy can even begin to be beneficial for the patient.

Thus, there is no debating that medication can be a successful means for treating severely debilitating mental diseases. A recent study appearing on the website of the Archives of General Psychiatry illustrated that after 16 weeks of treatment patients in both the medication and cognitive therapy groups showed improvement at about the same rate.

While psychiatric drugs, along with interpersonal therapy, can play an essential role in getting some people back on their feet after a severe bout with some sort of mental illness, there seems to be a rising number of people who seek to supplant interpersonal therapy altogether with mood altering drugs. As a result, there is the danger that the self-knowledge and self-insight that may result from using interpersonal therapy is being sacrificed in favour of attaining the end goal of feeling better sooner.

As medicine advances, almost all psychological afflictions will be able to be alleviated with the use of drugs, and there is reason to believe that many are taking advantage of this by using them gratuitously. While this is certainly not the case for all instances of psychiatric drug use, this danger does exist, and this way of relating to ourselves is in violation of what is arguably Immanuel Kant's most important version of the categorical imperative: the formula of humanity, where Kant implores that persons must treat others and themselves with inherent dignity, rather than solely as means toward some end.

1. Which one of the following most accurately expresses the main point of the passage?

(A) Kant's formula of humanity maintains that persons ought never to treat others or themselves exclusively as a means to an end.

(B) It is dangerous to use antidepressant drugs to supplant interpersonal therapy.

(C) Psychoactive drugs are being prescribed to millions of Americans at an increasing rate.

(D) Black box warnings are effective in reducing suicide rates.

(E) Brooke Shields successfully battled depression.

2. It can be inferred from the passage that millions of women:

(A) have postpartum depression every year in the United States.

(B) suffer from depression.

(C) like Brooke Shield's story.

(D) disagree with Tom Cruise's condemnation of antidepressants.

(E) have suicidal thoughts.

3. Which one of the following most accurately describes the author's attitude toward antidepressants as expressed in the passage?

(A) dramatic irony.

(B) overt disappointment.

(C) unconditional interest.

(D) qualified support.

(E) reasoned optimism.

4. With which of the following statements would the author most likely agree?

(A) There is a risk whenever we seek to evade the process of introspection and self-knowledge in favour of the expedient results that drugs may provide us with.

(B) As we attempt to overcome the emotional hurdles in our lives, we look at celebrities as role models.

(C) Psychoactive drugs are unsuccessful when prescribed to children and young adults.

(D) The use of label warnings has always positive effects.

(E) Interpersonal therapy is more advantageous than pharmaceuticals for the treatment of mental illnesses.

5. According to the passage, each of the following is true about antidepressants EXCEPT

- (A) They may be effective to supplement interpersonal therapy.
- (B) Their use decreased last year.
- (C) Kant opposed to their use for the treatment of depression.
- (D) Men, women, and children use them.
- (E) Brooke Shields used antidepressants after having a baby.

6. Which one of the following, if true, most weakens the author's argument against the abuse of antidepressants?

- (A) Paxil manufacturer paid Brooke Shields to talk about her battle against postpartum depression.
- (B) New technology and advances in medicine promise other forms of treating depression that may be even more effective than psychoactive drugs.
- (C) The cost of antidepressants is prohibitive to millions of Americans.
- (D) Psychotherapy is proved not to cure depression.
- (E) Antidepressants never have negative side effects.

7. Which one of the following best describes the organization of the passage?

- (A) A problem is described and a frequent solution to the problem is presented; some statistics are presented, an example of the solution combined with another solution is given, followed by some supporting evidence. Then, problems with the frequent solution are described. Finally, consequences of following the frequent solution are mentioned.
- (B) A problem is described and a possible solution to the problem is suggested; the solution's shortcomings are noted, an alternative solution is suggested, then qualified in light of new evidence.
- (C) A solution to a problem is described, multiple solutions to the problem are discussed, the possible outcomes of each solution are evaluated, and one solution is recommended over the others.
- (D) A problem is described and a possible solution to the problem is suggested; possible shortcomings of the solution are noted, an alternative solution is suggested, and a potential obstacle to the alternative solution is discussed.
- (E) A theory is stated, objections to the theory are noted, and the theory is dismissed in light of new evidence.

8. What would most reasonably follow from the end of the passage?

- (A) An elaboration of Tom Cruise's position on the use of antidepressants.
- (B) Brooke Shields announcement of the publication of a new book on postpartum depression.
- (C) A quotation from Immanuel Kant on the formula of humanity.
- (D) Brooke Shields' announcement of the launching of a promotional campaign for the use of Paxil.
- (E) FDA statistics on the use of Paxil.