



# DRUGGING THE MILITARY

## Psychotropic Drugs Create Suicide, Failing Service Members & Veterans



*"When the history of our second century comes to be written, may it be recorded that the American Psychiatric Association was largely responsible for the elimination of the international psychosis—war." – Dr. George H. Stevenson, APA President, 1941[1]*

One year later, on 19 December 1942, Britain's Prime Minister Winston Churchill warned: *"Restrict as much as possible the work of these gentlemen [psychiatrists], who are capable of doing an immense amount of harm with what may very easily degenerate into charlatanry."* [2]

Since then, U.S. military and veterans' mental health systems have been testing grounds for dangerous psychiatric drugs and procedures. The result? Rising suicide rates, lives cut short—and billions of dollars wasted on failed treatments.



**"Psychiatrists create an endless loop of drugging, ECT, and despair. Service members and veterans are left with lifelong disability**

## **A Marine's Final Words about psychiatry: "Just like a robot that hands out poison"**

or death. End psychiatric coercion now."

- Mark Miller, a 42-year-old Marine veteran, died by suicide in April 2025 outside a San Antonio VA hospital. Days earlier, a psychiatrist prescribed him the antipsychotic Seroquel[3]—a drug many service members call "Serokill." [4] "How nice—did not even listen to my story—just like a robot that hands out poison to every soldier." —Text from Mark to his father, one week before his death.

## **Massive Drugging of Veterans (2018–2023)**

- 2.3 million veterans were prescribed psychotropic drugs in 2023.[5]
- From 2018-2023, VA spent over \$2.5 billion—most on drugs linked to suicide and sudden death.[6]
- 2016: More than 1.8 million veterans had prescriptions filled by a VA pharmacy for psychiatric drugs, despite some inducing suicidal behavior.[7]

### Breakdown of usage in 2023:

- Antidepressants: 1.53 million (66%)
- Mood Stabilizers: ~1 million (43%)
- Anti-Anxiety/Sedatives: 697,174 (30%)
- Antipsychotics: 302,534 (13%)
- Stimulants: 171,089 (7%)

### Top Drug Expenditures 2018-2023:

- Antipsychotics: \$1.25 billion
- Mood stabilizers: \$638 million
- Antidepressants: \$416 million[8]

## **Drugs Linked to Suicide & Sudden Death**

- Antipsychotics like Seroquel increase the risk of sudden cardiac death.

- Antidepressants cause “Anxiety, agitation, panic attacks, insomnia, irritability, hostility, impulsivity, akathisia (severe restlessness).[9]
- Benzodiazepines: linked to cognitive dysfunction, overdose, and addiction.[10]
- Esketamine (antidepressant nasal spray, Spravato): FDA *black box* warns of sedation, dissociation, abuse, liver damage, cardiovascular instability, cognitive decline, and psychosis—like effects.[11] The drug was FDA approved in 2019 and was touted to be able to reduce suicides in veterans, despite a member of an FDA advisory committee describing the alleged benefits as “almost certainly exaggerated” and the manufacturer’s study design as flawed.[12] The Dept. of Veterans Affairs warns consumers that esketamine may be habit-forming. Further, “You should know that your mental health may change in unexpected ways when you use esketamine or other antidepressants even if you are an adult over age 24. You may become suicidal....”[13]

### **Suicide Among Veterans: A National Tragedy**

- Veterans account for nearly 14% of U.S. adult suicides.[14]
- 2020: Suicide was the 2nd leading cause of death among vets under 45[15]
- 2021: Over 6,000 veteran suicides[16]
- 2016: U.S. Army data:
- 46% of suicides were prescribed Central Nervous System drugs in the year before.
- 90% of suicide attempts are linked to psychiatric drug prescriptions.[17]
- 2019: 1.6% of vets aged 18–25 reported a suicide attempt in one year.[18]
- 2004: Antidepressants carry an FDA black-box warning for increased suicidality in those under 25.

### **Electroshock and Psychosurgery on Vets**

- WWII: Over 2,000 veterans lobotomized[19]
- 2018–2023: 2,527 veterans given electroconvulsive therapy (ECT)
- VA spent \$22.8 million on its delivery[20]

- 2010–2019: Tricare (military insurance for active service persons and families) spent \$17.6 million on ECT
- Even children 5 or younger received ECT
- 226% increase in ECT for those aged 18–24[21]

### **History of Exploitation: Psychiatry Experiments on Troops**

- 1955–1975: ~7,000 soldiers used in drug and chemical warfare tests
- Substances: LSD, BZ, nerve agents[22]
- 2022 article in *Federal Practitioner*: “This program was rife with violations of research ethics and human rights.”[23]
- Psychiatrist Dr. Colin Ross reported severe complications from LSD testing during these years[24]

### **The Next Wave: Psychedelic Drug Experiments on Veterans**

- 2019: DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) invested \$27 million into developing military psychedelics.[25]
- VA supports trials for MDMA (Ecstasy) and psilocybin (magic mushrooms)[26]
- 2023 study discussed~40% of participants in an earlier study on psilocybin experienced moderate to severe anxiety, panic, or distress[27]
- Prescribing psychedelics can be a for-profit venture, as side effects are rebranded as new mental disorders—like “Hallucinogen Persisting Perception Disorder” in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) to be further treated. [28]

**Psychiatry Profits While Veterans Pay the Price:** Psychiatrists create an endless loop of drugging, ECT, and despair. Service members and veterans are left with lifelong disability or death. End psychiatric coercion now.

[1] Stevenson as WFMH president, 1961-62; Thomas Szasz, M.D. *Manufacturer of Madness* (Syracuse University Publications and Continuing Education, 1970, 1997), p. 315

[2] Winston Churchill, Prime Minister’s Personal Note, Serial No, M. 624/2, “Lord President of the Council,” 19 Dec. 1942

- [3] "S.A. Veteran's Death spurs lawmaker's push," Press Reader, 12 Apr. 2025, <https://www.pressreader.com/usa/san-antonio-express-news/20250412/281526526890060>
- [4] <https://www.cchrint.org/2012/10/30/military-mental-health-treatment-becomes-frankenpharmacy/>;  
<https://www.cchrint.org/2024/11/08/veterans-day-cchr-calls-for-safeguards>
- [5] 2018-2023 Data Obtained by CCHR International through Freedom of Information Request from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, received Feb. 2024
- [6] 2018-2023 Data Obtained by CCHR International through Freedom of Information Request from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, received Feb. 2024; <https://www.cchrint.org/2021/09/13/cchrs-foia-request-to-veteran-health-administration-reveals-4-2-million-vets-prescribed-dangerous-drugs-costing-2-4-billion/>
- [7] <https://news.va.gov/27099/program-focuses-safe-psychiatric-medication/>
- [8] 2018-2023 Data Obtained by CCHR International through Freedom of Information Request from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, received Feb. 2024
- [9] "Worsening Depression and Suicidality in Patients Being Treated with Antidepressant Medications," US Food and Drug Administration Public Health Advisory, 22 Mar. 2004; "FDA Issues Public Health Advisory on Cautions for Use of Antidepressants in Adults and Children," *Science Daily*, 24 Mar. 2004, <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2004/03/040323072045.htm>;  
<https://guidestareldercare.com/blog/quetiapine-antipsychotic-is-linked-to-sudden-cardiac-death>
- [10] "Use of Benzodiazepines for PTSD in Veterans Affairs," U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, [https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/txessentials/benzos\\_va.asp](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/txessentials/benzos_va.asp)
- [11] <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2009/nov/heavy-ketamine-use-affects-short-term-memory>;  
<https://www.fda.gov/drugs/human-drug-compounding/fda-alerts-health-care-professionals-potential-risks-associated-compounded-ketamine-nasal-spray>
- [12] <https://www.cchrint.org/2019/06/26/cchr-warns-about-antidepressant-nasal-spray-esketamine-spravato-use-on-veterans/>; "FDA Overlooked Red Flags In Drugmaker's Testing of New Depression Medicine," Kaiser Health News, 11 June 2019, <https://khn.org/news/fdas-approval-of-new-depression-drug-overlooked-red-flags-in-its-testing/>; <https://www.jnjmedicalconnect.com/products/spravato/medical-content/spravato-treatment-in-the-vadod-clinical-practice-guidelines-for-the-management-of-major-depressive>
- [13] <https://veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov/MedicationsVA/203,a619017>
- [14] "Health Disparities in Suicide," Centers for Disease Control, 30 Jan. 2025, [https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/disparities/?CDC\\_AAref\\_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/disparities-in-suicide.html](https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/disparities/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/disparities-in-suicide.html)
- [15] <https://www.cchrint.org/2024/11/08/veterans-day-cchr-calls-for-safeguards/>; *2022 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report*, VA Suicide Prevention, Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, Sept. 2002, <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/data-sheets/2022/2022-National-Veteran-Suicide->

Prevention-Annual-Report-FINAL-508.pdf; "Health Disparities in Suicide," Centers for Disease Control, 30 Jan. 2025, [https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/disparities/?CDC\\_AAref\\_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/disparities-in-suicide.html](https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/disparities/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/disparities-in-suicide.html)

[16] "Veterans, advocates examine potential link between prescribed drugs and veteran suicide," WNEM 5, 15 Oct. 2024, <https://www.wnem.com/2024/10/15/military-veterans-families-advocates-examine-potential-link-between-prescribed-drugs-veteran-suicide/>

[17] <https://www.cchrint.org/2024/11/08/veterans-day-cchr-calls-for-safeguards/>; "Central Nervous System Polypharmacy May Increase Risk of Overdose and Suicide-Related Behavior among OEF/OIF Veterans," U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs, Health Systems Research, <https://www.hsrdr.research.va.gov/research/citations/PubBriefs/articles.cfm?RecordID=783>

[18] "Health Disparities in Suicide," Centers for Disease Control, 30 Jan. 2025, [https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/disparities/?CDC\\_AAref\\_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/disparities-in-suicide.html](https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/disparities/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/disparities-in-suicide.html)

[19] "The 'forgotten' lobotomies on World War II vets," PBS, 11 Dec. 2013, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/the-forgotten-lobotomies-on-world-war-ii-vets>

[20] <https://www.cchrint.org/2024/11/08/veterans-day-cchr-calls-for-safeguards/>

[21] 2018-2023 Data Obtained by CCHR International through Freedom of Information Request from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, received Feb. 2024, <https://www.cchrint.org/2024/11/08/veterans-day-cchr-calls-for-safeguards/>

[22] <https://www.cchrint.org/2024/01/12/cchr-calls-for-ceasing-psychedelic-drug-trials-on-military-and-veterans/>; David S. Martin, "Vets feel abandoned after secret drug experiments," CNN, 1 Mar. 2012, <https://www.cnn.com/2012/03/01/health/human-test-subjects/index.html>

[23] <https://www.cchrint.org/2024/01/12/cchr-calls-for-ceasing-psychedelic-drug-trials-on-military-and-veterans/>; Cynthia Geppert, "Psychedelics and the Military: What a Long, Strange Trip It's Been," *Federal Practitioner*, Oct. 2022, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9896363/>

[24] <https://www.cchrint.org/2024/01/12/cchr-calls-for-ceasing-psychedelic-drug-trials-on-military-and-veterans/>; Colin A. Ross, "LSD experiments by the United States Army," *History of Psychiatry*, Dec. 2017, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28686061/>

[25] <https://www.cchrint.org/2024/01/12/cchr-calls-for-ceasing-psychedelic-drug-trials-on-military-and-veterans/>; Cynthia Geppert, "Psychedelics and the Military: What a Long, Strange Trip It's Been," *Federal Practitioner*, Oct. 2022, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9896363/>

[26] "VA funds first study on psychedelic-assisted therapy for Veterans," *VA News*, 3 Dec. 2024, <https://news.va.gov/press-room/va-funds-first-study-on-psychedelic-assisted-therapy-for-veterans/>

[27] <https://www.cchrint.org/2024/01/12/cchr-calls-for-ceasing-psychedelic-drug-trials-on-military-and-veterans/>; "Case analysis of long-term negative psychological responses to psychedelics," Open Access, 25

Sept. 2023, Bremner, R., Katati, N., Shergill, P., et al., "Case analysis of long-term negative psychological responses to psychedelics," *Scientific Reports*, 13, 15998 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-41145-x>

[28] Kevin Franciotti, "We're Starting to Understand How Psychedelic Flashbacks Work," *VICE*, 19 May 2017, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/gvzkw9/were-starting-to-understand-how-psychedelic-flashbacks-work>; Peter M. Miller (Editor), *Principles of Addiction 1st Edition* (Academic Press, Massachusetts, 2013), Chapter, "Hallucinogen Persisting Perception Disorder," <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/neuroscience/hallucinogen-persisting-perception-disorder>

---

## Stay Informed! FREE subscription to CCHR's email newsletter:



Like Sign Up to see what your friends like.

## SHARE YOUR STORY/COMMENT

0 comments

Sort by



---

Facebook Comments Plugin