1 August 2016

Maria A. Oquendo, M.D.
President, American Psychiatric Association
Columbia University Medical Center
300 West 72\textsuperscript{nd} Street
Suite 1F
New York, NY 10023


Dear Dr. Oquendo,

We write to you in your capacity as President of the American Psychiatric Association, and as a staunch supporter of ethics in psychiatry, about our concerns regarding gross misrepresentations made in the above referenced journal article published in the \textit{American Journal of Psychiatry} in 2004 and reiterated recently in comments that appeared in the American Psychiatric Association’s \textit{Psychiatric News} discussing the same clinical trial in 2016.

Specifically, between January 2000 and April 2001 Forest Laboratories, Inc., conducted a multi-site clinical trial of citalopram for depression in children and adolescents, Protocol CIT-MD-18, IND Number 22,368, with the results published in 2004 by Wagner \textit{et al.} in the \textit{American Journal of Psychiatry}.

The article was ghostwritten by agents of the manufacturer and seriously misrepresented both the effectiveness and the safety of citalopram in treating child and adolescent depression.

While substantive problems with CIT-MD-18 and the Wagner \textit{et al.} article have been exposed in legal actions\textsuperscript{1} and in the medical literature,\textsuperscript{2,3} the article continues to be cited uncritically in the psychiatric literature as evidence of the efficacy of citalopram for treatment of adolescent depression\textsuperscript{4} when, in fact, it was no better than placebo.

Our main concern is that children and adolescents are continuing to be at risk of harm unnecessarily because well-intentioned physicians have been misled.
Moreover, the misrepresentation has been compounded by the following issues:

1) In a letter of May 9, 2016, the Journal’s editor, Dr. Robert Freedman, was asked by three of the undersigned, Drs. Jureidini, Amsterdam and McHenry, to retract the article, but he has curtly refused to do so.

2) In an email of July 11, 2016, Drs. Jureidini, Amsterdam and McHenry wrote to the former editor of the American Journal of Psychiatry who accepted the Wagner et al manuscript for publication, Dr. Nancy Andreasen, and asked her to support retraction of the article, but she did not respond.

3) Drs. Jureidini, Amsterdam and McHenry submitted for publication a letter to the editor of the Psychiatric News, Catherine F. Brown, on July 7, 2016 regarding the misrepresentations of Dr. Wagner on CIT-MD-18 and received no response.

The putative research misconduct involved in the CIT-MD-18 study reveals the pervasive influence of Forest's marketing objectives on the preparation and publication of a 'scientific' manuscript written primarily for marketing purposes and only secondarily as a peer-reviewed journal article. Forest’s own internal documents disclosed in litigation show that company staff were aware that there were serious problems with the conduct of this trial but concealed the problems in advancing their commercial objectives. Procedural deviations went unreported (failure to disclose that unblinded patients were included in the final outcome analyses contrary to the study protocol in order to impart statistical significance to a non-significant primary outcome measure). An implausibly large effect size was claimed. Positive post hoc measures were introduced while negative primary and secondary outcomes were not reported. Adverse events were misleadingly analyzed, hiding substantial agitation in the citalopram group. Many of the de-classified Forest documents have now been posted on the Drug Industry Document Archive (DIDA) at the University of California, San Francisco, and many more documents are in the process of being released into the public domain.

We believe that the unretracted Wagner et al. article represents a stain on the high standard of the American Journal of Psychiatry (AJP) and the American Psychiatric Association (APA). Neither the AJP nor the APA can claim to be a leader in scientific research and moral integrity while failing to redress this article that negligently misrepresents scientific findings.

In bringing this matter to your attention, we also ask that you write to the current editor of the American Journal of Psychiatry, Dr. Robert Freedman, supporting our request for retraction of Wagner et al. journal article.

We are making this letter available to interested parties and for possible posting in the public domain.

Yours sincerely
Jay D. Amsterdam, MD
Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry
Distinguished Life Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association
University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Jamsterd@mail.med.upenn.edu

Jon N. Jureidini, MB, PhD
Clinical Professor
University of Adelaide
Adelaide, Australia
jon.jureidini@health.sa.gov.au

Leemon B. McHenry, PhD
Lecturer, retired
Department of Philosophy
California State University, Northridge
Northridge, California
leemon.mchenry@csun.edu

David Healy, MD, FRCPsych
Professor of Psychiatry
Department of Psychological Medicine
Bangor University
Bangor, Wales, UK
david.healy54@googlemail.com

Bernard J. Carroll, MBBS, PhD, FRCPsych
Emeritus Professor and Chairman
Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
Duke University Medical Center
Durham, North Carolina
bcarroll40@comcast.net

John M. Nardo, MD
Assistant Professor, retired
Department of Psychiatry
Emory University
Atlanta, Georgia
1boringoldman@gmail.com

Thomas A. Ban, MD, FRCP(C)
Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry
Distinguished Life Fellow of the American Psychiatry Association
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, Tennessee
tomban@bell.net

Mark Kramer, MD, PhD
ENEKASUNO, LLC
Executive Vice President, C.O.O
Medical Oncology Research
Madrid and Barcelona, Spain
mark-kramer@verizon.net

Daniel Carlat, MD
Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry
Tufts University School of Medicine
Boston, Massachusetts
Publisher and Editor-in-Chief
The Carlat Psychiatry Report
daniel.carlat@gmail.com

Samuel Gershon, MD, FRCP
Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
samuelgershon258@gmail.com

Robert T. Rubin, MD, PhD
Distinguished Professor Emeritus
Distinguished Life Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association
Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences
David Geffen School of Medicine
UCLA
Los Angeles, California
robert.rubin@va.gov

James G. Williams, PhD
Emeritus Professor of Religion
Syracuse University
Syracuse, New York
jwilli77@cox.net

Barry Blackwell, MD
Emeritus Professor and Chairman
Department of Psychiatry
Milwaukee Clinical Campus
University of Wisconsin School of Medicine
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
blackwellbarry@hotmail.com
Edmund C. Levin, MD
Distinguished Life Fellow and Diplomate of the American Psychiatric Association
Senior Life Fellow and Diplomate of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Department of Psychiatry
Alta Bates Medical Center
Berkeley, California
eclevin@me.com

Steven A. Ager, MD, MS, DLFAPA, FCPP
Adjunct Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry
School of Medicine
Temple University
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
drsager@lawyerstress.com

Julie M. Zito, PhD
Professor of Pharmacy and Psychiatry
University of Maryland, Baltimore
Baltimore, Maryland
jzito@rx.umaryland.edu

---

\(^1\) United States v. Forest Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Cr. No. 10-10294-NG (D. Mass.); Celexa and Lexapro Marketing and Sales Practices Litigation: Master Docket 09-MD-2067-(NMG)

