

**Review: E. Fuller Torrey, *Surviving Schizophrenia: A Manual for Families, Consumers and Providers*, HarperCollins, NY, 1983 (1995 edn.)**

Pages: 409

**Schizophrenia: See Through the Illusion**

The author is obviously a happy cog in the Mental Illness Industrial Complex, and therefore subscribes to its impossible dogma that physical brain diseases are really ‘mental’, and so treatable with ‘medicines’. If this is not understood at the outset, the reader will be just as deceived like the many book reviewers lauding it as “brilliant”.

Conversely, others will be able spot internal contradictions, dangerous advice, and damage being done to ‘schizophrenics’ by the psychiatric profession. This may save their life, or help them waken friends or family members caught in schizophrenia’s ambit.

Not surprisingly, Torrey makes no attempt to refute giants of the discipline such as Drs Thomas Szasz and Peter Breggin who refute the mental illness hypothesis. He even notes 55% of the general public don’t even believe it exists.

He confuses an analogy with a scientific model, using the old canard of diabetes (a physical disease) as the best ‘model’ to understand schizophrenia. The two have nothing physiologically in common, and some psychotropics are even contraindicated with insulin. [p211]

His nonsense Evolutionism is also just below the surface, e.g., “the limbic system ... [is] merely an ancestral remnant of the primitive system for smelling.” [p151]

The scant scientific evidence he does offer is unconvincing, e.g., identical twin studies in which one develops schizophrenia, the second only has a 30 percent chance of occurrence [p156]. If it were a genetic condition it should be ~100%!

There is also a tacit admission of his bankrupt philosophy: “why is the disease so invisible?” [p8]

More contradictory statements:

-Schizophrenia is by [his] definition a form of brain damage, which drugs can cause, except they can't possibly cause schizophrenia!

“There is now abundant evidence that chronic and repeated usage of ... mind-altering drugs [including psychotropics] can damage the brain ... There is virtually no evidence ... these drugs can actually *cause* schizophrenia.” [p111]

It is a mysterious, selective illness:

“It should be emphasised that schizophrenia affects only some cognitive processes and leaves others completely intact.” [p149]

The attentive Christian will see in many of Torrey's cases 'schizophrenia' has hallmarks of demonic possession; it is a spiritual condition which no drug can cure, in fact, will only create or magnify occult oppression.

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## **Preface (pp. xiii-xviii)**

### **I) Dimensions of the Disaster (pp. 1-27)**

“Why is the disease so invisible?”[p8]

Nebuchadnezzar and Ezekiel are claimed to have been schizophrenics!

### **II) The Inner World of Madness: View From the Inside (pp. 28-83)**

‘Overacuteness’ is characterised by a “flooding of the mind with thoughts”.

Frequent inability to sort, interpret, and respond to stimuli.

Religious hallucinations are often visual, while schizophrenic are auditory.

### **III) The Diagnosis of Schizophrenia: View From the Outside (pp. 84-104)**

### **IV) What Schizophrenia Is Not (pp. 105-125)**

“There is now abundant evidence that chronic and repeated usage of ... mind-altering drugs [including psychotropics] can damage the brain ... There is virtually no evidence ... these drugs can actually *cause* schizophrenia.” [p111]

Schizophrenics are claimed to turn to drugs *after* they first experience symptoms like hallucination.

Drugs may well be used to self-medicate.

### **V) Prognosis and Possible Courses (pp. 126-139)**

10% of schizos require hospitalisation, and 15% some form of community care.

### **VI) What Causes Schizophrenia? (pp. 140-174)**

Dilation of the lateral and third ventricles is found in some.

Loss of hippocampus and amygdala tissue (~10-15%, and in 80% of cases in an identical twin study).

Increased dopamine D-2 receptor in the basal ganglia.

Decreased blood flow to the frontal lobe (hypofrontality).

Double simultaneous simulation, agraphesthesia (unable to identify palm-traced numbers), confusion about left and right sides of the body.

“It should be emphasised that schizophrenia affects only some cognitive processes and leaves others completely intact.” [p149]

“The limbic system ... merely an ancestral remnant of the primitive system for smelling.” [p151]

“No single pregnancy or birth complication has been shown to be especially associated with schizophrenia.” [p154]

“There is neuropathological evidence ... in some cases ... brain damage that causes the disease may occur very early in life.” [p155]

“Studies are underway ... looking for the gene or genes that may be responsible.” [p156]

“Studies of identical twins show ... when one twin develops schizophrenia, the second ... has approximately a 30 percent chance.” [p156]

It is difficult to understand why the disease hasn't died out given schizophrenics rarely reproduce.

One-third of schizophrenics have a family history of the disease.

Psychotherapy is claimed to do nothing as a treatment, and may actually make things worse (“mental health professionals who advocate such treatment should be regarded as interesting relics of the past.”) [p169]

Jule Henry: “psychosis is the final outcome of all that is wrong with a culture.”

## **VII) The Treatment of Schizophrenia (pp. 175-219)**

Voices” are claimed to be an “illness”

70% of those on drugs improve; 5% get worse.

“Antipsychotic drugs are not equally effective for all the symptoms of schizophrenia.”

Clozapine [Clozaril] is a benzodiazepine and family of Valium, Halcion, and Xanax. It causes sedation, dry mouth, tremor, restlessness, weight gain, suicidal ideation, and seizures[!].

Some drugs are contraindicated with insulin (so much for the diabetes ‘model’)! [p211]

Li's mechanism is unknown. Side effects may be: thirst; urination; tremor; diarrhoea; and acne.

10% of schizos suicide.

### **VIII) The Rehabilitation of Schizophrenia (pp. 220-250)**

The majority must rely on government or family to survive.

Any social housing should be set at a maximum of twelve persons.

Employment is almost impossible with the hallucinations; only 6% work full-time and 30% part-time ("I can't have any psychos working in my place").

25% are very isolated.

Li never begins under 5

### **IX) Six Major Problems (pp. 251-274)**

80-90% smoke, but they require *higher* antipsychotic dosages!

Smoking, especially heavy-tar, decreases Parkinson's like stiffness, tremor, and anti-psychotic medication.

Despite the above, schizophrenic lung cancer is lower than the general population.

Some drink over 30 coffees per day as well as colas, or eat instant coffee from the jar!

34% have abused alcohol and 26% street drugs.

"Sexual activity was extensive and far-ranging at the [state psychiatric] hospital." [p258]

One patient, "vividly described all the angels and devils in his bedroom telling him what and what not to do" while having intercourse.

Long-term contraceptions medroxyprogesterone acetate (Dopo-Provera) and Norplant implants last five years.

Antidepressants can cause malformations and congenital abnormalities, especially in the first three months of pregnancy.

A “Ulysses Contract” is one where the patient agrees to involuntary procedures after signing.

HIV is 1.6% in psychiatric hospitals (Texas) and 5.5% (New York).

Psychiatric patients will, “suffer if liberty they cannot enjoy is made superior to a health that must sometimes be forced on them.”

Most schizos aren’t violent, yet, “In another study, it was found that 15 of 20 individuals ... were arrested for attempting to push people in front of subway trains in NYC.”

10-13% of schizos [attempt?] suicide, 15-17% of manic-depressives, but only 1% of the general population. During ‘remission’ or immediately after a relapse are the most common times.

“Occasionally, persons with schizophrenia will commit suicide accidentally in a stage of acute psychosis, e.g., they may jump off a building because they think they can fly, or because voices tell them to do so.” [p272]

### **X) Questions Asked By Consumers and Families (pp. 275-318)**

Some are experts at manipulation: “Doc, I’m a little better but I’m not well enough to go to work.” [p278]

The line between an irresistible impulse and an impulse not resisted is no sharper than between twilight and dusk.

“Who can really know what was in a person’s mind when a criminal act was being committed months before he or she comes to trial.” [p279]

“Guilt is the gift which keeps on giving.”

76% of schizos talk in a nonsensical way.

Patients often develop sudden irrational fears and withdraw.

Some won't bathe for weeks,

The Hawthorn effect is when things change as they are closely studied.

Schizos have a 2X car accident rate.

## **XI) How to Be an Advocate (pp. 319-)**

55% of the public doesn't believe mental illness exists.

## **Appendices (pp. 320-392)**