

FDA Expected to Approve Drug Related to Prozac

From Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS—A cousin to the antidepressant Prozac may receive federal approval before the end of the year for treatment of obesity, representing a new wave of sales growth for this class of drugs.

Prozac, now in its fourth year on the market and approaching \$1 billion in annual sales worldwide, has been dogged for the past year by claims that it causes violent behavior including suicide.

A Harvard researcher's study describing six patients who developed violently suicidal thoughts while treated with Prozac gave rise to more than 50 lawsuits against the drug's manufacturer, Eli Lilly & Co., and helped inspire a media campaign against Prozac by the Church of Scientology, which opposes the practice of psychiatry.

The Food and Drug Administration's rejection Thursday of a Scientology group's bid to have Prozac pulled from pharmacy shelves has been interpreted by drug industry analysts as a sign that the agency will soon quell any lingering doubts about Prozac's safety. As a result, they reason, the door will be open for Lilly to market the drug Lovan to treat obesity.

"I interpret the FDA's recent action as fairly conclusive. I think they'll move rather quickly to

approve Lovan, but it's difficult to say what 'rather quickly' is," said Mark Mayer of the Sanford C. Bernstein & Co. investment firm.

Lilly's stock jumped \$2.50 a share Friday to \$79 in heavy New York Stock Exchange trading, partly on optimism about the future of Prozac and Lovan.

The last FDA hurdle Lilly may face before Lovan is approved, Mayer said, is a meeting later this year of the agency's Psychopharmacological Drugs Advisory Committee to consider whether Prozac and other antidepressants cause suicidal thinking. If Prozac is cleared finally of that possible side-effect, Lovan approval could come quickly, Mayer said.

"We predict Lovan will be approved for obesity in the latter half of 1991," said Ron Nordmann of Paine Webber. "The use of the product for the treatment of obesity has not been associated with violent behavior."

The patients most likely to be prescribed Lovan will be the extremely overweight at risk of contracting diabetes or hypertension because of their obesity, Nordmann said.

Prozac and Lovan are the same chemical compound, fluoxetine. Prozac is available in 20-milligram capsules and Lovan will be prescribed in 60-milligram doses, said Edward West, a spokesman for Lilly, based in Indianapolis.

East Grinstead Courier

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Scientology links claim

DRUGS GROUP ALERT

YOUNGSTERS and traders have been alerted to an anti-drugs charity based in East Grinstead, which is run according to the principles of L. Ron Hubbard, founder of the Church of Scientology.

The alert follows an appeal to companies in Crawley to contribute £1,000 towards the charity Narconon which provides a drug rehabilitation programme.

The programme, which can cost up to £5,000 and last for two to three months, uses nutritional supplements as well as exercise and saunas to rid the body of drugs. The system was originally devised by L. Ron Hubbard.

Mrs June Clay, drugs counsellor at the council-run Crawley Drugs Advice Centre, said people should know Narconon had connections with the Church of Scientology.

"I am concerned that the treatment costs £5,000 and concerned as to how many will find this amount of money," said Mrs Clay.

"In my personal opinion, people should be aware of the link with the Church of Scientology, especially as the sort of people that could come to them will be at their lowest ebb."

Mrs Clay said two people from Narconon had approached her to talk over their plans to set up a drug rehabilitation programme.

"They never mentioned anything about Scientology but when I asked them they both admitted they were members of the Church of Scientology and seemed surprised I knew," said Mrs Clay.

She added: "I can't comment on the type of treatment used on the Narconon programme - they say it works."

Ms Lesley Zimmatore, executive director for Narconon, denied there was any direct link between the church and the charity and said: "L. Ron Hubbard was the founder of the Church of Scientology and we also use his technology in the drug programme, but Narconon is a secular group."

"We are not connected to the church, but the church validates Narconon. If they know of

somebody on drugs then they would refer that person to us. There are no financial ties."

One of the people who approached Mrs Clay at Crawley was 40-year-old Susanne Lawrence, Narconon director and former alcoholic and drug addict.

Ms Lawrence, a member of the Church of Scientology for 12 years, said she was "at the end of the road" and had given up life altogether when she was introduced to the Narconon programme which cured her.

There was a pilot project in Britain in the 1970s but there was no permanent programme in the country until last year when several ex-addicts, two SRNs and several local residents in East Grinstead decided to get it off the ground.

Ms Lawrence said many individual scientists across the world had chosen to work in the Narconon programme but added: "Narconon is a non-religious activity and its articles of incorporation as a charity preclude any activity other than to address the problems of drug addiction and prevention."

"Independently produced accounts done by outside auditors clearly show that monies raised by Narconon for drug education and rehabilitation are spent on that and nothing else."

She said the cost of the treatment included "full board and accommodation, 24 hour care, vitamins and nutritional consultations with qualified practitioners and supervision by SRNs and trained lay staff."

Ms Lawrence would not say where the programme takes place but said that all initial inquiries had to be made to the national office in the High Street, East Grinstead.

Mrs Clay at the Crawley Drugs Advice Centre said that contacting her organization was the first step forward. She said: "At Crawley we have been working for nearly 30 years to get a walk in-centre and now have one."

"We are funded by Crawley Borough Council and are willing to help anyone free of charge. We have trained counsellors and a doctor visits twice a week. We are the first step towards directing someone to what is hopefully the right treatment."

East Grinstead Courier

COMMENT

Results are proof

MY interest in writing to you is humanitarian. I am a founding member of Narconon in England and have worked with young people on the Narconon programme.

I have also assisted in the writing of an authoritative book on the subject called Drugs and Drug Rehabilitation.

Possibly your article on Narconon last week failed in one respect, which was to delineate the difference between advice and total freedom from the effects of drugs on young lives. It is worthy that there can be an advice centre but what is also needed in this field is results.

These are some of the hard facts:

According to the Social Services Department in Sweden, the Narconon programme there has a 71 per cent success rate, i.e. 71 per cent of people who have been through the programme are living completely drug-free lives. Similarly, in Spain, 76 per cent success rate has been validated.

In the United States, 66,000 people have successfully completed this drug rehabilitation pro-

gramme since it started in 1966. Today, the Narconon Chilocco Centre in Oklahoma is the largest drug rehabilitation centre in the entire world.

In the USSR, where there is an increasing drug problem the government has officially recognised the Narconon drug rehabilitation programme. The first office opens in Russia next week and a 400 bed hospital has already been allocated solely for the purpose of drug rehabilitation under Narconon.

Anyone who has seen lives ruined by drug addiction will understand the importance of the work being done by this group. The results have long since been vindicated. By their deeds shall we know them.

A worker in this field is always dedicated and works long hours. His religious affiliations are not the issue. What matters is whether or not he can save youngsters from the horrendous ill effects (including death, all too often) of drug addiction.

Mrs S.W. Hebblewhite,
Executive Council Member,
Narconon UK,
High Street,
East Grinstead.

My priority is clear

NEARLY 20 years ago, a drug addict in an extreme condition was released from the probation on which he had been placed for possession of drugs, into my charge, and that of my wife, who is a State Registered Nurse and a registered sick children's nurse. He was looked after on a pilot project, which greatly refined and expanded, is now the Narconon Programme.

As the programme stands now, it is being lauded as effective in many parts of the world, and government funded in countries in Europe.

Having read your front page article with interest, surely the

decision that has to be made for those in the unfortunate position to have to make it, is 'Do I opt for the proven programme that will bring a drug-free, healthy happy future to the addict, or do I spend my £5,000 on a new car?'

If the new car wins, one is left only with what Ms Clay calls 'the first step towards directing someone to what is hopefully the right treatment.'

In this day and age, I know what my priority would be.

Major P. Wakley, (ret'd)
The White House,
Coombe Hill Road
East Grinstead.

State Agency Ordered to Act on Narconon Certification

By Michael McNitt
Enid Bureau

NEWKIRK — A judge on Friday ordered the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health to determine by next month whether a substance abuse center operating without state approval should be certified to remain open.

In the meantime, the Narconon Chillico New Life Center will be allowed to operate, but is prohibited from accepting new patients, according to an order issued by District Judge Neal Beekman.

Thirty-five patients are at the facility, located on the grounds of the old Chillico Indian School, said Bill Burkett, an Oklahoma City lawyer representing Narconon.

Friday's hearing, attended by more than 60 people, was held after the state Depart-

ment of Health sought a temporary injunction to shut down the facility.

Beekman issued his order after both sides came to an agreement during more than two hours of discussion in his chambers.

Rob Cole, a lawyer with the state health department, said officials with the agency will have access to Narconon records to make sure no additional patients are accepted until the facility wins state certification and licensing.

"I don't envision them violating the court order," he said. "Significant sanctions would be imposed if they violate the court order."

Tim Bowles, a lawyer with Narconon's

Substance Abuse Center Prohibited From Accepting New Patients

offices in Los Angeles, refused to comment after the hearing.

But Burkett said he was confident Narconon could meet the mental health department's certification requirements.

"We don't see any problems with that," he said. If Narconon is turned down in its certification bid, "then it's a new problem," he said.

The facility, operated by Narconon International, has been treating patients since February without a license from the Department of Health or certification from the Department of Mental Health.

Narconon originally contended the facility was exempt from state law because it is on Indian land. But Narconon's agreement

to comply with Beekman's order seems to make that argument moot.

Narconon last month applied to have its program certified by the mental health department. An agency spokeswoman said then that Narconon's program could not be inspected sooner than November and that the State Mental Health Board would not act until January.

Beekman ordered the mental health department to inspect Narconon by the end of this month and have its staff make a recommendation on certification at the board's October meeting.

Janie Hipp, an assistant state attorney general assigned to the mental health department, said the state agency can meet

Beekman's schedule.

Hipp said people wanting a public hearing would have to make a written request to the mental health department after the staff recommendations are released but before the October board meeting.

Most of the people attending Friday's hearing said they were against Narconon primarily because of its ties with the Church of Scientology, which some consider a cult.

"I would like to see Narconon removed from Kay County, the state of Oklahoma and the United States," said one man, who like most others would speak only on terms of anonymity. "I do not like the Church of Scientology."

If Narconon wins certification from the mental health department, it still must be licensed by the health department.