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Bad Medicine: The medical untouchables

Thank you Dr Des Spence for having the courage and moral fortitude to speak where thousands of others remain deafeningly silent. I am polydrugged, having been prescribed Ativan (1985), sertraline (2005), and tramadol (2012). The consensus is that I should come off these. I agree, BUT who, pray, will help me with withdrawal? On my medication it says with a view of

reduction, that is, on the Ativan and tramadol — although not once has there been any suggestion as to how. I turned to 'Dr Google' and a helpline in Bristol — one of only two in the UK. It has taken 2 painstaking years to withdraw safely from benzodiazepines.

I am a taxpayer and have been for over 40 years. Why, unlike for illegal substances, is there no help, TLC, or rehab facilities for me and thousands like me? A worker, a mother, a friend. I have no respect for the doctors who are either ignorant about this or wilfully silent. Honesty is needed from the profession in order to restore a semblance of trust.

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A new spin on old methods

I recall my GP trainer sharing with me his preferred distraction techniques to ease the examination of young children, particularly those distressed with intercurrent illness. Over the last 25 years I've added my own methods, the latest of which, an accidental discovery, puts a new spin on clinical examination techniques.¹ Recently, a 5-year-old with distressing otalgia picked up the fidget spinner on my desk and was so engrossed he barely noticed me examine him. I must add that the fidget spinner was a gift, but this experience perhaps gives colleagues an excuse to buy one as a justifiable practice expense. Happy spinning!

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