

Antidepressant Paxil found to double the risk of violent behavior

(NewsTarget) New British research has found that users of GlaxoSmithKline's antidepressant drug Paxil were twice as likely to experience violent behavior compared to patients taking placebo.

Researchers from Cardiff University in Britain and the Cochrane Centre examined data on Paxil -- or its generic form, paroxetine -- from GlaxoSmithKline, legal cases and emails from nearly 1,400 patients who responded to a British TV program on antidepressants. The researchers found that 60 out of 9,219 people taking Paxil -- 0.65 percent -- experienced a "hostility event," compared to 20 out of 6,455 patients taking placebo, or 0.31 percent.

Paxil is in a class of drugs called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors -- or SSRIs -- that recently came under fire from doctors who claimed it increased the risk of suicide in teenage users. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration concluded in 2004 that SSRIs caused teen and adult users to run higher risks of suicide, and ordered its strongest "black box" warning label on several SSRI drugs.

Researchers David Healthy, David Menkes and Andrew Herxheimer concluded in the online journal Public Library of Science-Medicine that although the risk of violence in Paxil takers was rare, it was a risk worthy of further study.

"The new issues highlighted by these cases [of violence] need urgent examination jointly by jurists and psychiatrists in all countries where antidepressants are used," they wrote.

"This finding helps explain why school shootings are almost always conducted by children who are taking antidepressants," explained Mike Adams, a consumer health advocate and critic of the overmedication of children. "We also know that SSRIs cause children to disconnect from reality. When you combine that with a propensity for violence, you create a dangerous recipe for school shootings and other adolescent violence," he said.