

# SECOND OPINION

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Summer 2009

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## Psych. Drug Use Increases Tenfold for Canadian Kids

-Brian Eaton

A University of British Columbia medical study has found the use of atypical antipsychotic drugs has skyrocketed in the past decade for Canadian children under fourteen.

As reported by CBC News earlier this July, UBC epidemiologist Colin Dormuth found that prescriptions for drugs such as Risperdal, Seroquel and Zyprexa had increased tenfold in as many years in British Columbia for adolescents in the province.

Describing UBC's Therapeutics Initiative, which carries out independent reviews of the safety and effectiveness of medicines, Dormuth expressed surprise at the youthful age of some of the children who are on the powerful medications.

"It's definitely weighed towards 11-, 12-, 13-, 14-year-olds, but we do see instances as young as one year of age," he said, adding that prescribing anti-psychotics is not justified when there is inadequate safety information to prove that children won't be harmed by their use.

The increased use of the drugs among the young occurs despite Health Canada stating that they're not indicated for children, and have indeed been implicated in strokes and sudden deaths among adults. One of them, Zyprexa, has been the focus of lawsuits and class actions in the US and Canada. (See accompanying article this issue.)

## New Staff at SOS

Versatility and compassion are the hallmarks of the two newest staff members at Second Opinion Society.

Both Susan Gwynne-Timothy and Graeme Brighton hail originally from Ontario. Susan has been hired as Administrative Coordinator for SOS, and Graeme is our Summer Student Assistant.

Graeme brings to us his extensive experience with sports and recreation, and has been focusing on coordinating recreational activities for SOS participants during a summer that so far seems made for outdoor Yukon activities.

He's worked as a rock-climbing instructor, volunteer mountain bike patroller, YMCA recreational instructor, and a volunteer emergency responder at London, Ontario's Fanshawe College, where he will be returning in the fall to complete the second year of the Paramedic Program. The program has already provided him with a wealth of experience, varying from crisis intervention, mental health counseling and support opportunities to accompanying local EMS and ambulance crews. With the help of funding from YTG Advanced Education Department's Summer Career Placement Program, we have been able to hire Graeme for three months until August 21.

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Susan Gwynne-Timothy has a background in both the arts and the practice of wholistic healing alternatives. A graduate of universities in London on both sides of the Atlantic, she holds a BA in English Literature and History from the University of Western Ontario and an MA in History of Art from the Courtauld Institute of Art at the UK's University of London.

While in England, Susan worked as assistant to the director of London's Hayward Gallery, as a gallery assistant marketing antique prints and an arts and auctions sales representative for London's Daily Telegraph newspaper, among a number of other arts-oriented career avenues.

During her six years in the Yukon, Susan's experience has centred on promoting healing and self-awareness for the many people she's come in contact with. An active member of the Yukon Wholistic Health Network, she has presented workshops on guided meditations, reiki and reflexology, among other topics, including a workshop on depression and mental health as part of the network's Options for Health video series.

In addition to a full slate of activities, as mother to two young boys, health educator, conference coordinator, advisor and facilitator, Susan has found time to expand her active interest and participation in varsity rowing into the co-authorship of *Stroke: The Inside Story of Olympic Contenders*, a study of the socio-behavioral, environmental and organizational factors that make for success in the careers of Olympic rowers.

Second Opinion Society extends a cordial invitation to all of our members, friends and associates, to drop by SOS and chat with our two newest staffers.

**Second Opinion is published quarterly.**  
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## Zyprexa Update

Previous issues of Second Opinion have covered the story of how Indianapolis-based pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly deliberately covered up its role in causing undesirable side effects such as strokes and diabetes, and then initiated lawsuits against those who had blown the whistle on the company in 2007.

Since then, Eli Lilly has itself become the subject of numerous lawsuits and class actions initiated by at least a dozen US states. Earlier this year, the company paid out a \$1.4-billion out of court settlement to the various state prosecutors, and a further \$1.2-billion settlement to various individual plaintiffs. This amounts to the largest fraud payout in US history.

In Canada, a class action has been recently initiated against Lilly, as advertised in the July 18 edition of the Globe and Mail's business section. Information on the class action can be obtained from the website [www.classproceedings.ca](http://www.classproceedings.ca) under "current cases", or [www.classaction.ca](http://www.classaction.ca) and [www.zyprexacanadianclassaction.ca](http://www.zyprexacanadianclassaction.ca).

## Poetry by Charity D. Papineau

As God and man reunite  
We come to the realizing  
Of what creation is intended to be-  
Awareness that the deep stirring  
In where the Hope lies waiting.  
Equilibrium for all people,  
Places unseen.  
What would cause all people to see.  
For escape with the imagination,  
To capture a gift or a dream...  
These five things:  
People, Places, Health, Relationships  
And at last...Mystery.  
Not knowing what  
Will nature bring,  
As God stirs creation,  
Nature pours out through me.