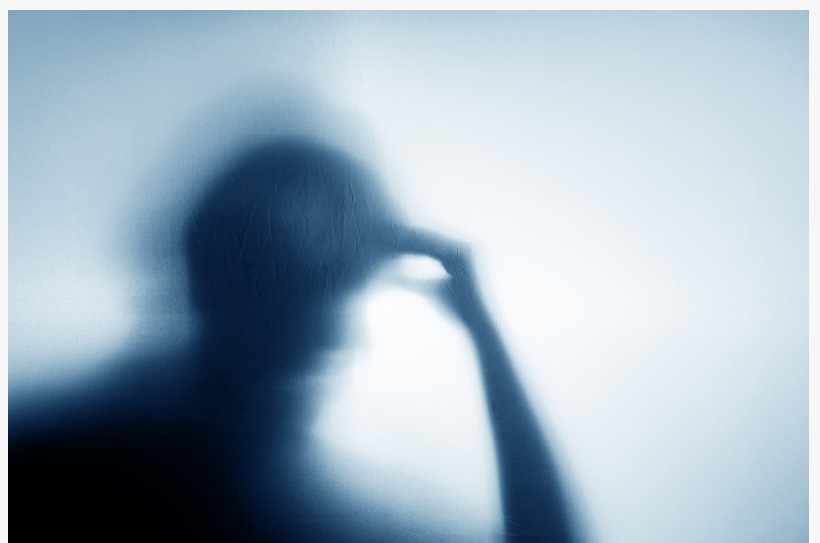


CCHR Says Patients Electroshocked Without Warning of Brain Damage Have Recourse

Mental health watchdog advises that recent global mental health human rights guideline warns electroshock can cause brain damage, citing U.S. manual.

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, November 6, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Electroconvulsive therapy, commonly known as electroshock or ECT, is being given to an estimated 100,000 Americans each year—and 1.4 million worldwide[1]—despite global health authorities' recognition that it causes brain damage. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' (OHCHR) recent guidance on [Mental Health, Human Rights, and Legislation](#), says informed consent for the damaging procedure must include that it causes brain damage, citing a U.S. electroshock device manufacturer's manual confirming this effect.[2] The Citizens Commission on Human Rights International says that while anyone forced to undergo a treatment that inflicts brain damage should seek redress, the practice should be banned outright to prevent such risk in the first place.



CCHR points out that every day Americans are put at risk of brain damage from electroshock and are likely never warned of this because psychiatrists dismiss the documented adverse effect.

The guideline further states that ECT use in children, "should be prohibited through legislation." [3] "Yet, only four states in the U.S. have banned it and, in several states, children in the 0-5 age group have been subjected to its violence. It is also administered to pregnant women, impacting their unborn," said Jan Eastgate, president of CCHR International.

ECT sends up to 460 volts of electricity through the brain to induce a grand mal seizure, which involves a loss of consciousness and violent muscle contractions, masked by an anesthetic. There are no clinical trials proving this is safe or effective and psychiatrists admit it is not a cure for depression or other mental health issues.[4]

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The WHO-UN OHCHR guideline is clear: “International human rights standards clarify that ECT without consent violates the right to physical and mental integrity and may constitute torture and ill-treatment. People being offered ECT should also be made aware of all its risks and potential short- and long-term harmful effects, such as memory loss and brain damage.”[5]

Yet, as CCHR points out, every day Americans are put at risk of brain damage from electroshock and are likely never warned of this because psychiatrists dismiss the documented adverse effect. “Informed consent is a misnomer,” Eastgate says, “because brain damage is not included, thus constituting malpractice.”

A 2021 law firm article about medically-inflicted brain damage reinforces this aspect of medical malpractice.[6] For example, a Dallas County Texas jury delivered a \$19.7 million verdict against a doctor on behalf of the family of a girl who sustained brain damage from surgery and later died.[7] “The same should occur for anyone who experiences brain damage or memory loss from ECT,” says Eastgate.

Australian psychiatrist Niall McLaren, who is outspoken about electroshock, advises patients that any psychiatrist who tells them “‘You need ECT’ is really only saying, ‘I don’t know what else to do.’” He is adamant: “No psychiatrist needs to use ECT.”[8] Commenting upon the new guidelines, he wrote, “This is the definitive statement from the most authoritative agencies in the world on how mental health acts are to be shaped and written.” The guidelines are critical of psychiatry’s biomedical model, which includes ECT and psychiatric drugs. McLaren says this model “debases the human experience.” He adds that psychiatrists are “messing with brains,” when “shocking them with various chemicals and electricity, or cutting them as in ‘leucotomy/lobotomy’....”[9]

The risk of being subjected to brain damage from ECT increases when laws allow for its forced use. California has gone in the opposite direction of protecting individuals from coercion mental health practices, with a series of bills enacted in October 2023 to strengthen ways to involuntarily commit, which can compel forced treatment. The law’s expansion “will lead to locking more people up against their will and depriving them of fundamental rights,” Deb Roth, senior legislative advocate with the advocacy group Disability Rights California, told The Associated Press.[10]

The international guideline calls on governments to “commit by law to a ‘zero coercion’ policy,” and recommends: “A person must not administer to or perform on another person any of the following—(a) deep sleep therapy; b) insulin coma therapy; (c) psychosurgery; and (d) any other operation or treatment proscribed by regulations.”[11]

Electroshock has a sordid history; it was invented in Italy in April 1938 by a psychiatrist watching pigs being shocked and stunned before being slaughtered. A 2017 Medical History article, “‘Electroshock Therapy’ in the Third Reich,” explored the early application of electroshock during the period of National Socialism in Germany during WWII. “Within the Third Reich, electroshock

therapy was not only introduced in psychiatric hospitals, asylums, and in the Auschwitz concentration camp in order to get patients back to work, it was also modified for ‘euthanasia’ murder,” wrote authors Lara Rzesnitzek and Sasha Lang from the Institute for the History of Medicine, University of Berlin.

“Only after the end of the official ‘euthanasia’ murder operation in August 1941, entitled T4, did the psychiatric elite begin to promote electroshock therapy as a modern ‘unspecific’ treatment in order to reframe psychiatry as an ‘honorable’ medical discipline.”[12]

“The honorable thing to do is to eliminate electroshock as a therapy,” Eastgate said.

CCHR welcomed the WHO-UN OHCHR recognition that greater accountability is needed in the mental health industry, where victims and survivors of shock treatment or other abuse “should be entitled, whenever possible, to restitution, compensation, rehabilitation and guarantees of non-repetition.”

If you or someone you know has been damaged by electroshock or any other psychiatric treatment, [report it here](#).

Experience the compelling stories of ECT survivors in CCHR’s definitive documentary on electroshock, [Therapy or Torture](#).

[1] <https://www.cchrnt.org/electroshock/>

[2] <https://www.cchrnt.org/2023/09/18/who-guideline-condemns-coercive-psychiatric-practices/> citing World Health Organization, OHCHR, “Guidance on Mental Health, Human Rights and Legislation,” 9 Oct. 2023, p. 58

[3] Ibid., World Health Organization, OHCHR, p. 58

[4] <https://www.cchrnt.org/electroshock/>

[5] Op. cit., World Health Organization, OHCHR, p. 58

[6] <https://www.paulsonandnace.com/what-kinds-of-brain-injuries-are-caused-by-medical-malpractice/>

[7] <https://hamiltonwingo.com/featured/dallas-doctor-hit-with-19-7m-verdict-after-patient-death/>

[8] <https://www.cchrnt.org/2023/04/11/uk-legislators-call-for-ban-electroshock-treatment/> citing Niall McLaren, “No Psychiatrist Needs to Use ECT,” 27 June 2017, <https://www.madinamerica.com/2017/06/no-psychiatrist-needs-use-ect/>

[9] Niall McLaren, "On the human rights of 'mental' people," 10 Oct. 2023, <https://www.niallmclaren.com/p/on-the-human-rights-of-mental-people>

[10] "California Gov. Newsom signs law paving the way for involuntary treatment of people with mental illness or addiction," Daily News, 10 Oct. 2023, <https://www.nydailynews.com/2023/10/10/newsom-signs-new-law-involuntary-treatment-mental-illness-addiction/>

[11] Op. cit., World Health Organization, OHCHR, p. 59

[12] Lara Rzesnitzek and Sasha Lang, "'Electroshock Therapy' in the Third Reich," Medical History, Jan 2017, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27998332/>

Amber Rauscher

Citizens Commission on Human Rights

+1 323-467-4242

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