

[PDF] Mad In America: Bad Science, Bad Medicine, And The Enduring Mistreatment Of The Mentally Ill

Robert Whitaker - pdf download free book

Books Details:

Title: Mad in America: Bad Science,

Author: Robert Whitaker

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Description:

Hot on the heels of an optimistic film about Nobelist John Nash's schizophrenic journey comes medical journalist Robert Whitaker's disturbing exposé of the cruel and corrupt business of treating mental illness in America. *Mad in America* begins by surveying three centuries of mental health treatments to discover why positive outcomes for schizophrenics in the U.S. for the last 25 years have decreased--making them lower than those in developing countries. Whitaker asks, "Why should living in a country with such rich resources and advanced medical treatments for disorders of every

kind, be so toxic to those who are severely mentally ill?"

One of Whitaker's answers draws upon the historic and current assumptions of a physical cause for schizophrenia. This resulted in cruel and unusual physical treatments--from ice-water immersion and bloodletting to the more contemporary electroshock, lobotomy, and drug therapies with dangerous side effects. This physical cause model leads to Whitaker's more provocative explanation: that mental illness has become a profit center. He offers disturbing details about how good business for drug companies makes for bad medicine in treating schizophrenia. From drug companies skewing their studies and patient/subjects kept in the dark about experiments to the cozy relationship between the American Psychiatric Association and drug companies, Whitaker underlines the mistreatment of the mentally ill. This courageous and compelling book succeeds as both a history of our attitudes toward mental illness and a manifesto for changing them. --*Barbara Mackoff* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From Publishers Weekly Tooth removal. Bloodletting. Spinning. Ice-water baths. Electroshock therapy. These are only a few of the horrifying treatments for mental illness readers encounter in this accessible history of Western attitudes toward insanity. Whitaker, a medical writer and Pulitzer Prize finalist, argues that mental asylums in the U.S. have been run largely as "places of confinement facilities that served to segregate the misfits from society rather than as hospitals that provided medical care." His evidence is at times frightening, especially when he compares U.S. physicians' treatments of the mentally ill to medical experiments and sterilizations in Nazi Germany. Eugenicist attitudes, Whitaker argues, profoundly shaped American medicine in the first half of the 20th century, resulting in forced sterilization and other cruel treatments. Between 1907 and 1927, roughly 8,000 eugenic sterilizations were performed, while 10,000 mentally ill Americans were lobotomized in the years 1950 and 1951 alone. As late as 1933, there were no states in which insane people could legally get married. Though it covers some of the same territory as Sander Gilman's *Seeing the Insane* and Elaine Showalter's *The Female Malady*, Whitaker's richer, more detailed book will appeal to those interested in medical history, as well as anyone fascinated by Western culture's obsessive need to define and subdue the mentally ill. Agent, Kevin Lang.

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