

Medicaution

Medication is one of those things that will never cease to interest me; I am one amongst very many who takes some form of it every day.

Medicines have been developed to help regulate almost every function of the human organism, in both the physical and mental realms. In my case, I take meds prescribed to me for a mental health condition.

Health consumers are in some ways no different to your average consumer in the supermarket. To draw an analogy, some shoppers will look at the ingredients and nutritional information of each product before they decide to put it in their trolley; others will ignore this and just load the food in.

Some people who take medications are like the second group: they will take whatever they've been prescribed without really thinking about it.

I myself started out as a member of this second group, beginning in 2001. I took the medications I'd been prescribed without giving it a second thought, and continued to do so for years.

Olanzapine was one of those pills, a side effect of which was weight gain. But side effects or not, I told myself, "doctor knows best..."

I still haven't lost that extra weight – a belated New Year's

resolution perhaps? Anyway, those kilograms are testament to the point of this article – it's always a good idea to know the benefits and possible drawbacks of what you're taking. A bit of consideration now, may help prevent trouble further down the line.

The internet is a great tool in this respect, if you use it properly. Just because you have access to information about different medications by no means makes you an expert, in much the same way that reading the nutritional info on a packet of food doesn't make you a nutritionist. It does, however, provide you with the resources to better understand what you're taking.



That's not necessarily all you may need to research; it may also be helpful to learn more about the condition you've actually been prescribed it for. This may, in turn, help you to be more aware of the range of medications available.

Writing from experience, this combination of knowledge may actually improve your life.

Part of this improvement has come from the fact that my choice of medication has helped me quit smoking, and given me more energy. I believe another important part is the feeling of empowerment I've received from having greater control over what I'm taking.

If you're interested in taking a similar approach, thanks to Google information has never been easier to find.

Some related websites I can also suggest would be:

www.drugs.com
www.rxlist.com
www.wikipedia.org

Another option available to you if you don't have access to the internet, or would like assistance to find the right information, is to come and visit us at Like Minds Taranaki, on the 3rd floor of the Brougham House building, 50/54 Devon St West.

We'd be more than happy to help; although we don't offer a clinical service, we may be able to help you identify the right questions to ask your psychiatrist or GP.

As well as sharing knowledge, sharing your experiences with others may help in your journey to recovery. We host a support group which is open to all people with experience of mental illness, which is held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month, from 10:30am to 12pm.

Tony Spencer ☎(06)7590966

"Korero Mai" is edited by Gordon Hudson, "What's On" by Stephanie Mapley and "Whakaaro Pai" by Tony Spencer—all from Like Minds Taranaki. Your news and views are eagerly sought. Like Minds Taranaki, PO Box 5015, New Plymouth, 3rd Floor, Brougham House, Devon Street West, NP, ph 06-759-0966 mental.health@xtra.co.nz. www.likemindstaranaki.org.nz

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