

The article "Shock therapy for mental patients will be reviewed" continues the ignorant tradition of demonizing electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) in the media (the very use of the anachronistic and misleading phrase "shock therapy" is unwarranted) without presenting the compelling reasons for its continued use. Most of the facts and quotations in the article, including the gratuitous final paragraph about pigs in an abattoir, are simply taken from an article by Davar in "Issues in Medical Ethics", without questioning whether Davar's presentation of the issue is an unbiased and scientifically accurate one. What Ms. Davar, and by extension Ms. Jain, has done is simply cite authorities who agree with her point of view, quote statistics without context, use an abundance of negative adjectives, and ignore outright the empirically proven benefits (often life-saving) of ECT in many categories of mentally-ill patients. This is shabby and irresponsible medical journalism.

While this is not the place to dispute, point-by-point, Ms. Davar's presentation of her position and Ms. Jain's repetition of it, I would like to quote, to counter their negative emphasis, from Andrew Solomon's widely read, intensively researched, highly respected book, *The Noonday Demon: An Anatomy of Depression*. Solomon writes: "Antidepressants are effective [against major depression] about 50 percent of the time, perhaps a bit more; ECT seems to have some significant impact between 75 and 90 percent of the time... Many patients feel substantially better within a few days of having an ECT treatment - a boon particularly striking in contrast to the long, slow process of medication response. ECT is particularly appropriate for the severely suicidal - for patients who repeatedly injure themselves and whose situation is therefore mortally urgent - because of its rapid action and high response rate, and it is used in pregnant women, the sick, and the elderly, because it does not have the systemic side effects or drug-interaction problems of most medications."

There are, indeed, problems with the administration of ECT, especially in a country like India with its poor health infrastructure. It would be foolish to deny that the practice is subject to abuse (as Solomon and numerous Indian writers report). The continued use of "direct" ECT (without the use of an anesthetic) is certainly a matter of concern - and a concerted effort to implement national guidelines making "modified" ECT (using an anesthetic)

mandatory is as necessary as it is laudatory. But we can
45 all do without more pieces of journalism which perpetuate
the myth that ECT is a medically unjustified, indeed barbaric
practice, tantamount to torture. This ignorant view, equally
prevalent in the West as it is in India, has more to do with
movies like *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* than
50 with scientific fact.

1. It can be inferred that the author believes that the author of the article mentioned in the first line
(Select ALL answer choices that apply)

- A. fails to question her source material rigorously
- B. includes unwarranted matter
- C. uses an excess of pejorative terms

2. The author's attitude towards ECT is best described as a

- A. determined neutrality
- B. mild criticism
- C. wholehearted approbation
- D. qualified approval
- E. laudatory justification

3. The author's makes his point primarily by

- A. offering a particular authority as a counterview
- B. attacking one author's lack of social responsibility
- C. criticizing the mindset of medical journalists
- D. a reasoned discussion of the merits and demerits of a therapy
- E. offering an objective evaluation

It is exceedingly difficult to make people realize that an evil
is an evil. For instance, we seize a man and deliberately do
him a malicious injury: say, imprison him for years. One would
not suppose that it needed any exceptional clearness of wit to
5 recognize in this an act of diabolical cruelty. But in England
such a recognition provokes a stare of surprise, followed by an
explanation that the outrage is punishment or justice or
something else that is all right, or perhaps by a heated attempt
to argue that we should all be robbed and murdered in our beds
10 if such senseless villainies as sentences of imprisonment were
not committed daily. It is useless to argue that even if this
were true, which it is not, the alternative to adding crimes
of our own to the crimes from which we suffer is not helpless
submission. Chickenpox is an evil; but if I were to declare
15 that we must either submit to it or else repress it by seizing

everyone who suffers from it and punishing them by inoculation with smallpox, I should be laughed at; for though nobody could deny that the result would be to prevent chickenpox to some extent by making people avoid it much more carefully, and to
20 effect a further apparent prevention by making them conceal it very anxiously, yet people would have sense enough to see that the deliberate propagation of smallpox was a creation of evil, and must therefore be ruled out in favor of purely humane and hygienic measures. Yet in the precisely parallel case of a
25 man breaking into my house and stealing my diamonds I am expected as a matter of course to steal ten years of his life. If he tries to defeat that monstrous retaliation by shooting me, my survivors hang him. The net result suggested by the police statistics is that we inflict atrocious injuries on the
30 burglars we catch in order to make the rest take effectual precautions against detection; so that instead of saving our diamonds from burglary we only greatly decrease our chances of ever getting them back, and increase our chances of being shot by the robber.

35 But the thoughtless wickedness with which we scatter sentences of imprisonment is as nothing compared to the stupid levity with which we tolerate poverty as if it were either a wholesome tonic for lazy people or else a virtue to be embraced as St. Francis embraced it. If a man is indolent,
40 let him be poor. If he is drunken, let him be poor. If he is not a gentleman, let him be poor. If he is addicted to the fine arts or to pure science instead of to trade and finance, let him be poor. If he chooses to spend his wages on his beer and his family instead of saving it up for his old age, let
45 him be poor. Let nothing be done for "the undeserving": let him be poor. Serve him right! Also -- somewhat inconsistently -- blessed are the poor!

4. The passage is most probably intended to

- A. serve as an introduction to a more detailed discussion of poverty
- B. censure imprisonment as a punitive measure
- C. analyze the possible repercussions of social evils
- D. continue a prior discussion of strong measures against social evils
- E. make people recognize social evils in the face of deliberate obfuscation

5. It can be inferred from the passage that the author would agree with all the following **except**

- A. most people don't realize that by punishing offenders they are surrendering themselves to the vicious cycle of crime and punishment
- B. sentences of imprisonment have little success in reducing the crime rate in society
- C. it would be ridiculous to inoculate people suffering from chicken pox with small pox
- D. if criminals were not strongly punished for their misdeeds there would be no law and order in society
- E. tolerating poverty is at least as bad as inflicting punishments on criminals

6. The author's argument about imprisonment would be most weakened by showing that

- A. imprisonment is not widely regarded as an act of cruelty
- B. chicken pox and burglary are not analogous evils
- C. imprisonment does not cause malicious injury
- D. sentences of imprisonment are given increasingly rarely
- E. a burglar who commits murder in self defense would not be hanged

7. The author apparently believes that people at the time he wrote the passage were

- A. inclined to consider poverty a social evil
- B. anxious to take the right steps to ensure an orderly society
- C. too ready to judge other people unfairly
- D. inconsistent in their attitude to poverty
- E. in favor of unusually harsh punishment of all offenders

8. Answer this question based on the information in the paragraph below.

Early data on seat-belt use showed that seat-belt wearers were less likely to be killed in road accidents. Hence, it was initially believed that wearing a seat-belt increased survival chances in an accident. But what the early analysts had failed to see was that cautious drivers were more likely to wear the belts and were also less likely to cause 'big accidents', while reckless drivers were more likely to be involved in 'big' accidents and were less likely to wear the belts.

Which of the following, if true, could an opponent of the view presented above best cite as a reason for recommending continued use of seat-belts?

- A. Careful drivers who are involved in accidents caused by reckless drivers, would be more likely to survive if wearing a belt
- B. All drivers should be required by law to wear a belt
- C. The ratio of 'big' to 'small' road accidents is very small
- D. In fatal accidents seat-belt wearers in the front seat are less likely to survive than those wearing seat belts in the back seat
- E. On average, careful drivers pay lower insurance premiums than do drivers who have been involved in accidents.

Answer Key

1. ABC
2. D
3. A
4. A
5. D
6. B
7. D
8. A