

Promoting diseases to promote drugs – the role of pharmaceutical industry in fostering good and bad medicalization

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Abstract

Pharmaceutical industry and drugs advertisement is sometimes accused of “creating diseases”. This article assesses and describes the role of that industry in fostering medicalization. First, the notions of medicalization and pharmaceuticalization are defined. Then, the problem of distinguishing between harmful overmedicalization and well-founded medicalization is presented. Next, the phenomenon of disease mongering is explained and illustrated by the case analysis of medicalizing pain and suffering in three contexts: 1) the general idea of medicalizing physical pain, 2) the medicalization of grief, and 3) disease mongering of pseudoaddiction - a condition promoted in order to increase the demand for opioid pain relievers.

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