

WORLD BENZODIAZEPINE AWARENESS DAY

W-BAD.ORG



**PRESS
PACKET**

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PRESS PACKET

OVERVIEW

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WHAT

**World
Benzodiazepine
Awareness
Day

(W-BAD)**

WHEN

**July 11

Annually**

WHERE

Worldwide

WHO

This day belongs to everyone all over the world – victims of benzodiazepines and their families, friends, caregivers, supportive doctors/medical providers as well as other concerned citizens

WHY

To raise public & medical awareness about the serious dangers & harms of as-prescribed benzodiazepines

HOW

Through **activism**, lobbying, unity, education, sharing experiences, info sharing, media, journalism, video, etc.

INTRODUCTION TO W-BAD



W-BAD's globe logo

World Benzodiazepine Awareness Day (W-BAD) seeks to raise global awareness about iatrogenic (medical-induced) or prescribed benzodiazepine dependence. These drugs affect different people in different ways, but there is a large group of people worldwide who suffer from debilitating physical dependence (from as-prescribed use) and withdrawal - alone, in the dark and without any help or recognition.

This problem has been allowed to spiral out of control for many decades due to inaction from regional health sectors and governing bodies. W-BAD seeks to bring this problem out of the dark to allow help for those who so desperately need it, and to prevent this from happening to others, whilst reducing the risks and costs to greater society. W-BAD is held annually on July 11 worldwide in honour of Prof. Heather Ashton for all that she has contributed to the cause.

MEET PROF C.H. ASHTON

Bio Source: lader-ashton.org



Chrystal Heather Ashton DM, FRCP is Emeritus Professor of Clinical Psychopharmacology at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, England

Professor Ashton is a graduate of the University of Oxford and obtained a First Class Honours Degree (BA) in Physiology in 1951. She qualified in Medicine (BM, BCh, MA) in 1954 and gained a postgraduate Doctor of Medicine (DM) in 1956. She qualified as MRCP (Member of the Royal College of Physicians, London) in 1958 and was elected FRCP (Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, London) in 1975. She also became National Health Service Consultant in Clinical Psychopharmacology in 1975 and National Health Service Consultant in Psychiatry in 1994.

She has worked at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne as researcher (Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Reader and Professor) and clinician since 1965, first in the Department of Pharmacology and latterly in the Department of Psychiatry. Her research has centred, and continues, on the effects of psychotropic drugs (nicotine, cannabis, benzodiazepines, antidepressants and others) on the brain and behaviour in man. Her main clinical work was in running a benzodiazepine withdrawal clinic for 12 years from 1982-1994.

At present she is involved with the North East Council for Addictions (NECA) of which she is former Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee on which she still serves. She continues to give advice on benzodiazepine problems to counsellors and is patron of the Bristol & District Tranquilliser Project. She was generic expert in the UK benzodiazepine litigation in the 1980s and has been involved with the UK organisation Victims of Tranquillisers (VOT). She has submitted evidence about benzodiazepines to the House of Commons Health Select Committee.

Professor has published approximately 250 papers in professional journals, books and chapters in books on psychotropic drugs of which over 50 concern benzodiazepines. She has given evidence to various Government committees on tobacco smoking, cannabis and benzodiazepines and has given invited lectures on benzodiazepines in the UK, Australia, Sweden, Switzerland and other countries.

[THE ASHTON MANUAL >>](#)

“

I am constantly amazed at the ignorance of doctors about benzodiazepines and much else. There have been literally thousands of papers in medical journals about benzodiazepines - both adverse effects and withdrawal methods, but doctors go blithely on prescribing them long-term...I am afraid doctors do not think, when they prescribe a drug: What does it do? How does it work? What are its side-effects? and many essential elementary questions that common sense would tell you are worth considering. It seems to be left to the patient to discover the true nature and risks of prescribed drugs.

-Dr. C. Heather Ashton, DM, FRCP

”

World Benzodiazepine Awareness Day was conceived by the acting Chair Barry Haslam, former Chair of Oldham TRANX, and jointly organized by Wayne Douglas, founder of benzo-case-japan.com.

Barry Haslam joined with New Zealander Wayne Douglas to launch the day after they were introduced to each other through Prof. David Healy, a world-renowned psychiatrist, psycho-pharmacologist, scientist and author based in London, UK.

The pair have received messages of support for W-BAD from around the world.



Barry Haslam, Chair



Wayne Douglas, Co-Chair

MEET THE W-BAD
ORGANIZERS

SLOGAN



W-BAD's Unity Logo

"CHANGE
THROUGH
UNITY"

The W-BAD slogan, "Change Through Unity" has inspired people internationally to compile a [video compilation exposé](#) on social media consisting of gripping cautionary personal accounts, which can be viewed on the W-BAD YouTube page. Some speaking out on the issue have expressed concerns about possibly being stigmatized for being harmed by a medication that just happens to be a controlled substance, but the vast majority of these patients are actually not addicts. Most took the medication in therapeutic doses, as prescribed, for a variety of conditions (some of which were physical and not psychiatric in nature). These people also typically have no history of substance abuse.

Despite their concern of stigma, the sufferers of this illness are uniting to let the world know that they are suffering needlessly, with many having lost their careers, families and financial security because of iatrogenic illness that could have been avoided. They hope for better solutions and at long last, validation of their injuries. The "Change Through Unity" slogan is truly a call for action by campaigners, and to the world alike, to band together in grassroots activism efforts in an attempt to affect the change surrounding these irresponsibly-prescribed drugs that has been so desperately needed for over fifty years and counting.

OBJECTIVES

- To gain governmental and medical recognition that “doctor induced benzodiazepine dependency” is a massive global problem that needs urgent addressing (these are innocent everyday people taking as-prescribed).
- To raise public awareness about this decades old problem that has been continuously swept under the carpet by global governments.
- To encourage the establishment of a mandatory maximum prescribing period of no more than 4 weeks of regular use (based on the Committee on Safety of Medicines’ 2-4 week prescribing guidelines), unless deemed absolutely necessary and accompanied by adequate informed consent about the risks of prolonged, repetitive exposure (NB: Patients already taking these drugs shouldn’t be forced to stop if they don’t want to).
- To encourage the establishment of ‘specialized’ withdrawal facilities for those who so desperately need them.
- To encourage the implementation of the much needed fully-funded research to thoroughly investigate the long-term health implications of prescribed benzodiazepines and Z-drugs.
- To encourage the provision of proper training for doctors and medical staff and to help them learn more about the serious implications of benzodiazepine prescription.
- To provide victims with a sense of purpose and the opportunity to unify, so that they aren’t left alone in the dark, as has been the case for much too long.
- To give recognition to those who haven’t survived and to those who have been abandoned or left alone to suffer (to give them a voice).
- To commemorate Prof. Heather Ashton for all that she has contributed to the cause over so many decades (July 11 is her birthday).

MISSION STATEMENT

World Benzodiazepine Awareness Day seeks to raise global awareness about the problem of doctor induced benzodiazepine drug dependence that continues to affect millions of unsuspecting, innocent people worldwide - either directly or indirectly.

Our mission focuses on the problem of ordinary, everyday people being harmed by these drugs as a result of taking them 'as prescribed' - usually for stress, anxiety, sleep, etc. Despite recommendations and warnings, medical providers often prescribe these drugs repeatedly for prolonged periods without giving proper informed consent regarding the risks or appropriate advice on withdrawal protocols. Polypharmacy (dangerous co-prescribing) is also a problem and has resulted in an increased death rate in the US and other countries.

Global governments have allowed the problem to quietly spiral out of control for decades creating a problem so large that there is no political will to address it. Consequently, millions of regular people are left to suffer needlessly in the dark, without any understanding or access to appropriate care and support. Worse yet, there is a lot of media that stigmatizes these people by misrepresenting the problem with words like 'abuse,' 'misuse,' 'addicts,' and the like. Unfortunately, this tendency forces the problem further underground leaving others to fall victim at the hands of ill-informed doctors and ignorant politicians.

World Benzodiazepine Awareness Day seeks to shift accountability back to where it belongs (with drug companies, prescribers, regulatory bodies, etc.), while encouraging the establishment of stricter controls for the prevention of iatrogenic benzodiazepine dependency and the provision of specialized withdrawal facilities for those who so desperately need them. This is an opportunity for victims of failed medical and political establishments to come out and reclaim their lives; to make a unified effort in raising awareness by saying, "this problem is urgent and it needs addressing now!".

W-BAD does not seek to restrict access to these drugs for those who are already physically dependent on them or feel that they may benefit from them nor does it seek to force anyone to stop or reduce against their own will.

W-BAD is not associated with illicit use or abuse, as those are a completely separate issue.

In the US, prescriptions for BZs have more than tripled and fatal overdoses have more than quadrupled in the past 20 years, researchers found. They also found that the amount of medication distributed had grown by three-fold. After standardizing doses of all drugs, they found that people with prescriptions received 1.4 times more medication in 2013 than 20 years earlier.

—[American Journal of Public Health, online February 18, 2016](#)

In 2008, approximately 1 in 20 US adults (85 million prescriptions in 2007) aged 18 to 80 years used BZs. This fraction rose substantially with age. Long-term use—a supply of the medication for more than 120 days—also increased markedly with age. Women were about twice as likely as men to receive benzodiazepines. And most prescriptions for benzodiazepines are written by non-psychiatrists. —NIH-funded study

Benzodiazepines are the most widely prescribed drugs in the world, used mainly as anxiolytics and hypnotics. —WHO 1996

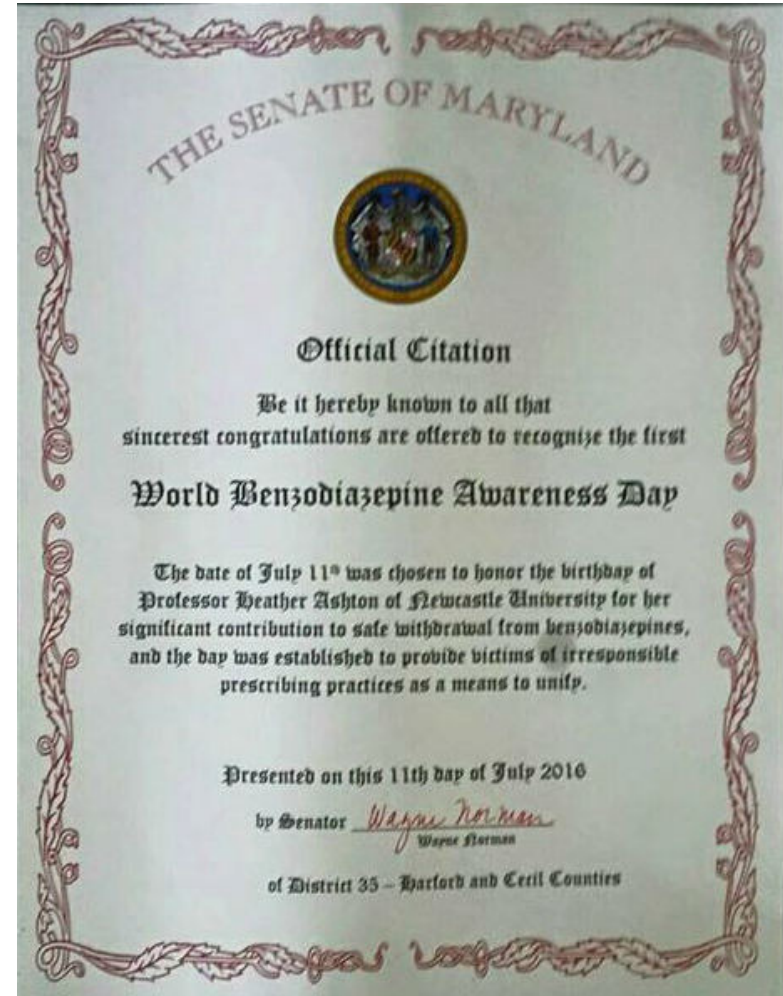
[Click here for statistics in other countries](#)

AN ESTIMATED 30%

of people prescribed a benzodiazepine will experience a severe withdrawal syndrome and/or adverse effects from the drug(s). It most commonly affects patients who took the medication as prescribed and whom do not have a history of addiction or a substance abuse disorder.

Source: Benzodiazepine research expert Malcolm H Lader, O.B.E., LL.B., Ph.D., M.D., D.Sc., F.R.C. Psych., F. Med Sci., F.L.S., Emeritus Professor of Clinical Psychopharmacology at King's College, England.

STATE RECOGNITION



Citations (above) from the states of Massachusetts (left) and Maryland (right) giving official State recognition to World Benzodiazepine Awareness Day. “This is another way to put our cause before our elected officials,” says Geraldine Burns of Boston, MA, one of the U.S. WBAD representatives. A Resolution has also been filed in Massachusetts by Geraldine Burns. There have also been legislation proposals ([Bill HD.3594](#)) to the state of Massachusetts which center around providing patients receiving a new benzodiazepine prescription with informed consent of the risks involved.

QUOTES ABOUT W-BAD

Debbie Abrahams, MP for Oldham East and Saddleworth, and Shadow Minister for Work and Pensions, said:

"I am pleased that World Benzodiazepine Awareness Day has been established to draw attention to this important issue. Increasing numbers of prescriptions for addictive, psychoactive drugs are being given to both adults and children, including benzodiazepines. While these drugs may help some people in the short term, there is growing evidence that long-term use leads to worse outcomes, and many patients report devastating persistent withdrawal and other negative effects.

"Oldham is lucky to be home to committed campaigners, who have for many years have highlighted the appalling damage that over-prescribing and long-term use of benzodiazepines has had on many people.

"As a result of their efforts, and in collaboration with our Director of Public Health, since 2005, Oldham has one of a handful of dedicated withdrawal facilities in this country – a service that I believe should be replicated nationwide. I hope World Benzodiazepine Awareness Day helps drive the campaign for improving services globally."



A motion (Early day motion 264) was put forward in the British Parliament on 29 June 2016 making reference to World Benzodiazepine Awareness Day:

"That this House is aware that 11 July 2016 is World Benzo Awareness Day and that this is a campaign which seeks to raise awareness of the dangers of benzodiazepine drugs and the mis-prescribing of them; believes that global awareness of the severe problem of prescribed benzodiazepine drug dependency is essential as it continues to affect millions of unsuspecting, innocent people worldwide, either directly or indirectly; and further believes that investigation must continue to examine the issues of prescription without assessment and without regular review."

[Click here to view the Motion](#)

MORE QUOTES ABOUT W-BAD

July 2016

"Oldham Council is pleased to support the first World Benzodiazepine Day. It is important we recognise the problems associated with the use of Benzodiazepines. As the commissioner of a service to help people withdraw from Benzodiazepine use, we are proud to support the continuation of work to raise awareness of the problems associated with the use of Benzodiazepines."

Alan Higgins, Oldham Council Director of Public Health



In a statement for the inaugural World Benzodiazepine Day on the 11th July 2016, the British Medical Association said:

"Benzodiazepines can cause short and long term harm to patients when their prescription and withdrawal is not carefully managed. Not enough is known about the levels of dependence and withdrawal and the level of harm that is being caused. There is also too little research about the long term effects of these drugs."



Audrey's W-BAD tattoo she painted and wore while handing out pamphlets on the streets of Paris.

W-BAD campaigners distributing pamphlets in Nagoya, Japan for W-BAD's inaugural year.



[Click here for more photos](#)



(Left)
Campaigner Jim
in Chicago
distributing a
W-BAD pamphlet
to Trudy in one
of the local
hospitals.



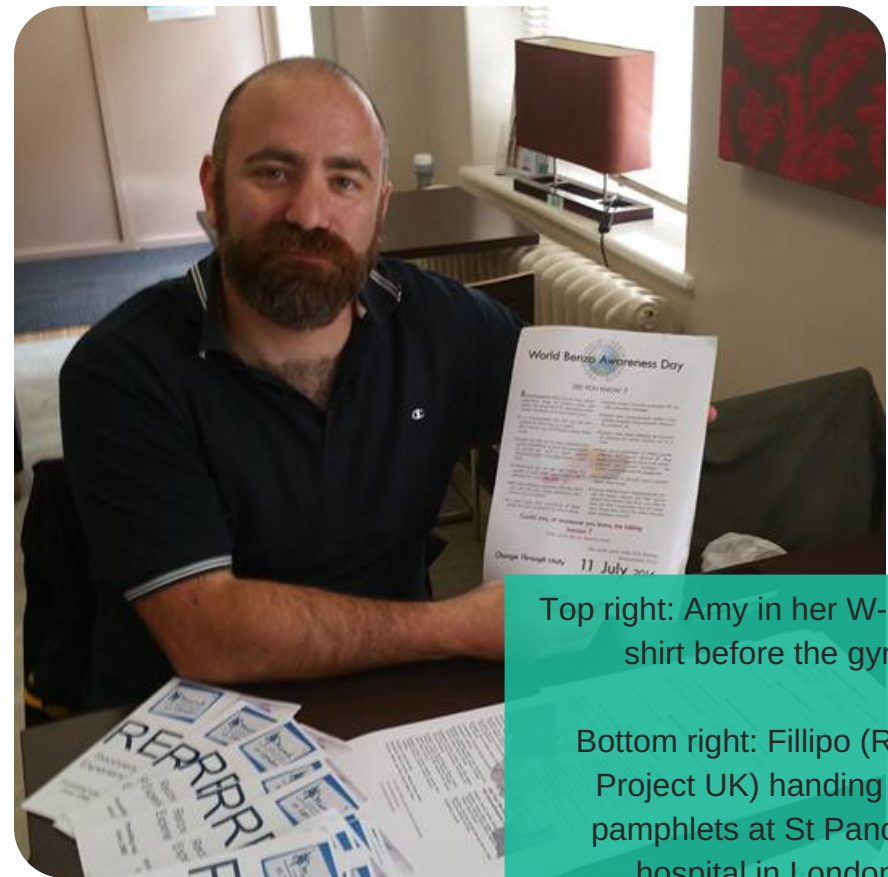
(Right) Corinne
campaigning in
Paris, holding a
sign that reads
"Benzos are not
candy!!!" in French.



Blaise the dog doing his part by sporting his awareness gear



Top right: Amy in her W-BAD T-shirt before the gym



Bottom right: Filippo (REST Project UK) handing out pamphlets at St Pancras hospital in London

PAMPHLET CAMPAIGNS & PETITIONS

In Tokyo, campaigners met with and presented petitions (top right image) to the Japanese Ministry of Health. The petition requested: controlled prescribing periods, training for all medical workers, establishing of specialized withdrawal facilities, and the general abolishment of prescribing these drugs to children (unless absolutely deemed necessary). [Click for petition](#)

Pamphlet campaigns are a large part of W-BAD's global awareness initiatives. Campaigners print pamphlets containing educational information about iatrogenic injury from benzodiazepines and distribute them in public areas. In 2016, there were pamphlet campaigns worldwide: Denmark (middle right image), Tokyo, Nagoya, Paris (bottom right image), London, and Oregon - to name a few.



Journée Mondiale de Sensibilisation aux Benzos

[Click here to view pamphlets
in other languages](#)

LE SAVIEZ-VOUS ?

Les benzodiazépines (BZD) sont les molécules les plus largement prescrites dans le traitement des manifestations anxieuses, de stress et de troubles du sommeil. Elles sont aussi prescrites dans le cadre de dépression, de douleurs chroniques, pour réduire les contractions musculaires et pour bien d'autres troubles.

> Il est recommandé, comme indiqué sur les notices, de ne pas prescrire de benzodiazépines au-delà de 8 à 12 semaines, de 2 à 5 jours pour les somnifères en cas d'insomnie occasionnelle et de 2 à 3 semaines en cas d'insomnie transitoire. Mais la plupart des prescripteurs sont mal informés à ce sujet.

> Certains experts (Pr Lader) affirment que les BZD peuvent être plus addictives que l'héroïne. Prescrire au-delà de la durée légale de recommandation peut entraîner une dépendance iatrogène et des dommages physiques et psychologiques.

> Des études récentes associent une utilisation prolongée des BZD à des dégâts irréversibles.

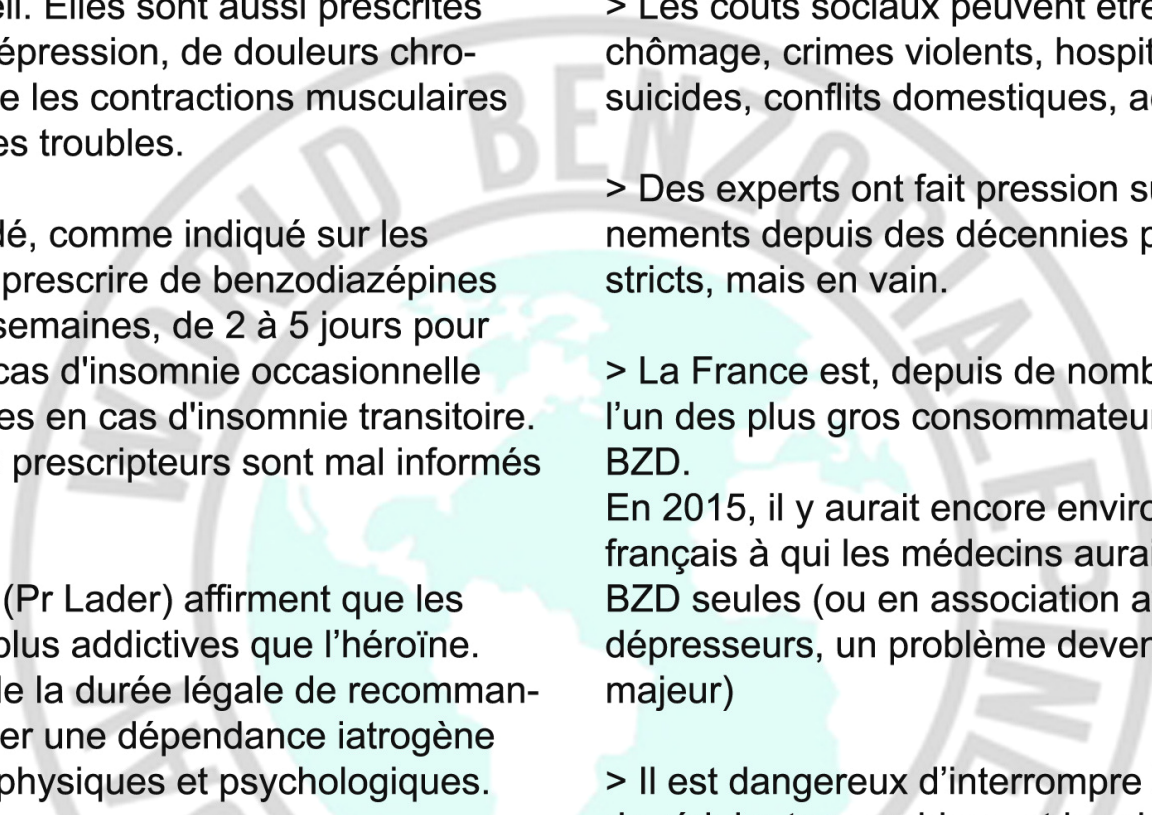
> Les coûts sociaux peuvent être significatifs : chômage, crimes violents, hospitalisations, suicides, conflits domestiques, accidents, etc...

> Des experts ont fait pression sur les gouvernements depuis des décennies pour des contrôles stricts, mais en vain.

> La France est, depuis de nombreuses années, l'un des plus gros consommateurs au monde de BZD.

En 2015, il y aurait encore environ 10 millions de français à qui les médecins auraient prescrits des BZD seules (ou en association avec des anti-dépresseurs, un problème devenant également majeur)

> Il est dangereux d'interrompre brutalement ou



W-BAD IN THE NEWS

Barry takes centre stage for world Benzo Day launch

By Lucy Kenderdine

A PASSIONATE Oldhamer campaigning against the long-term prescribing of benzodiazepines has taken his fight to the world stage by helping create an international awareness day.

Barry Haslam, former chairman of Oldham Tranx, has helped to launch World Benzo Day on July 11, a campaign designed to highlight the problems facing patients addicted to prescription drugs.

Barry suffered years of memory loss and a change of personality when addicted to benzodiazepines prescribed for depression. After finding the strength to stop taking them and suffering withdrawal almost 30 years ago, he has campaigned tirelessly against the long-term prescription of addictive drugs.

Barry, from Uppermill said: "I have been very fortunate and proud to work with Oldham Primary Care Trust and Oldham Clinical Commissioning Group, who have funded a

MORNING NEWS USA

EDITOR'S PICK

It is a world public health scandal

By Lucy Kenderdine

A CAMPAIGN against the long-term prescribing of benzodiazepines founded by an Oldhamer has received support from across the globe ahead of the first international awareness day for the issue.

World Benzodiazepines Awareness Day, a campaign designed to highlight the problems facing patients affected by taking the prescription drugs, was set up by Barry Haslam, former chairman of Oldham Tranx.

With the help of contacts from around the world, the awareness day on Monday has seen hundreds of people sign up to take part and share their stories in a bid to bring the issue to the attention of health organisations and governments.

Barry (73), from Uppermill, said: "World Benzodiazepines Awareness Day seeks to raise global awareness of the

W-BAD's inaugural year was featured in a few various news articles (click images above to read specific articles)

W-BAD was also featured by (click each to hyperlink):

- Canadian Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
- Every Woman Over 29
- Kelly Brogan MD
- Madinamerica.com
- Addiction Dependency Solutions
- CEPUK.org
- Dr. Peter Breggin Hour (9-21-16)

New Zealander loses legal fight over crippling med a

Former Japan resident seeks to spread word about the dangers of benzodiazepines

ZETT GIST

Simon Scott

Wayne Douglas spent years in New Zealand from 1961 to 1965, but this New Zealand-born resident has a story to tell.

"The real story I should like to tell about myself," Douglas says, "is my battle to get my life back in the 1980s, which was only about 100 years from the end. Because I was unable to walk for a few years."

Douglas alleges that Japan was a major and possible cause, and was diagnosed by a series of doctors as benzodiazepines, a type of tranquilizer he had been unwittingly prescribed by a Japanese doctor.

"In one of the main stations along the way I took off all of my work clothes and gave them straight to the rubbish bin, down and all," he remembers. "I felt so depressed and dirty within myself from the effects of addiction, and also because I didn't want to keep anything that reminded me of the suffering I had to endure at the time. I ended up burning all of my belongings away." In addition, his addiction to prescription drugs weakened his body to such a degree that even carrying a light load was too much for him.

Douglas first came to Japan in 1961 on a two-year scholarship for postgraduate studies of Japanese, and has spent over 20 years in total in Japan working as both an English teacher and COE coordinator for international relations in local government at various locations.

In March 2011 he started working at the National Environmental Association as a CEO. Everything had been going smoothly at first and all seemed well, but the trouble started



A changed man Wayne Douglas took his fight for compensation for debilitating addiction to benzodiazepines due to long-term treatment prescribed by a Japanese doctor to the Supreme Court of Japan, which refused to hear his case. (Simon Scott)

**W-BAD's
Co-Chair in
The Japan Times**

Click to read



W - B A D
ON FILM

Holly Hardman, director of the documentary "As Prescribed," squatting next to Scott Shelley (DP) who is filming. W-BAD is featured in this film about benzodiazepine iatrogenesis. [Click here for the film's website.](#)



Geraldine Burns (W-BAD's US rep) being filmed in Boston, MA about W-BAD 2016 for the documentary, "As Prescribed". (Click above arrow to play trailer for film)

W-BAD.ORG

EXPLAINER

VIDEO



Click globe to play

CONTACT US



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