

22 January 2020

SUBMISSION

RE: Inquiry

Dear Commissioners,

I wish to voice my very strong disagreement as a mother of the inquiry you are conducting into mental health specifically the 1.25 million 0-3 year olds potentially being screened for mental illness!

Proposing screening questions that are so subjective (can't be proven medically) puts many children at risk of being labelled mentally ill and prescribed psychiatric drugs for symptoms that are normal behaviours of a child like irregular feeding, difficulty sleeping, crying, temper tantrums, shyness just to name a few. I am not aware of any current adequate evidence to assess that previous mental health checklists/assessments on children has had any substantial effect on children and their families. How can this go ahead without this proof?

Not considering that there is other solutions to mental health issues that could be assessed from a more holistic approach such as assistance with diet, sleep, exercise.

The increase of antidepressants especially in children is alarming! In 2017/2018 101,174 children under 17 years old were on them a 34% increase in 5 years!! These drugs can have very serious side effects including suicidal behaviour and suicide! Not considering alternative treatments with these side effects at risk is alarming!

In conclusion my hope is that there will be an inquiry into mental health that is based on facts and not just more and more taxpayers money poured into a system that is obviously not working!

Anne Farrelly