

From: Broadcast
Sent: Wednesday, May 09, 2001 4:05 PM
To: Centre Staff
Subject: Message to All Staff



Centre
for Addiction and
Mental Health
Centre de
toxicomanie et
de santé mentale

May 9, 2001

To all Centre Staff:

In follow up to previous communication with you about the events leading up to and following the Centre rescinding a job offer last year to Dr. David Healy, I am writing to update you on the issue as of today.

You may have read the article in Saturday's *Globe and Mail*, which reported that we "withdrew a job offer to a prominent British psychiatrist because of a speech he gave that was critical of the pharmaceutical industry."

This characterization of our reasons for rescinding Dr. David Healy's job offer is misleading and we wish to provide you with a better understanding of the factors involved in our decision.

As you may already know, the Centre sent a letter to Dr. Healy on April 21 outlining factors involved in our decision to rescind the job offer. We were aware, through media reports, that he wanted further explanation. And the decision to send the letter was made following internal discussions and a subsequent request from the University of Toronto to send such a letter.

As we stated earlier, rescinding a job offer is not something the Centre takes lightly. There were a number of factors involved in our decision and we did not want to go public with those factors because we wanted to maintain the confidentiality present and prospective employees expect of us. However, Dr. Healy has now gone public with the confidential letter, as well as mischaracterizing our actions and, therefore, we would like to clarify any misperceptions.

Prior to our offer of employment to Dr. Healy, the Search Committee was aware that he had particular views about fluoxetine as expressed in literature and popular media. However, in his presentation on November 30th, in Toronto, Dr. Healy expressed extreme views that are extraordinary extrapolations, scientifically irresponsible and in fact, incompatible with scientific evidence. These views go well beyond his peer-reviewed published work, which we were familiar with before his appointment.

No one disputes Dr. Healy's freedom to say whatever he wants in our or any other University or academic health sciences centre. However, the extreme nature of the views he expressed at his presentation on November 30th shocked a disturbing number of future colleagues within the Centre and the University, to the point where the Centre felt that Dr. Healy would not have the necessary respect and support of staff.

Our actions continue to be mischaracterized with the implication that we made the decision to withdraw the offer to Dr. Healy based on outside pressures and/or a concern about donor support in view of Dr. Healy's opinions on Prozac and SSRIs in general. This is absolutely not the case. Instead, our decision was motivated by the fact that Dr. Healy has made sweeping statements that do not meet the standards of science. In fact, his extreme views were not restricted to Prozac. They also related to: antipsychotics essentially causing more harm than good and increasing psychiatric hospitalization in the modern era.

In our opinion, the studies and support data referenced by Dr. Healy do not come close to justifying the conclusions he makes, nor do they stand up to appropriate scientific scrutiny.

It's one thing to raise questions, it's another thing to reach conclusions based on unacceptable methodology. Our primary concern is patients and staff. And we were deeply concerned that Dr. Healy would bring this approach to all of his work and especially into the patient care environment as Clinical Director, Mood and Anxiety Program.

The Centre has never made an offer or withdrawn an offer on the basis of impact on an outside donor. Neither Eli Lilly nor any other company has ever had an influence in our decision-making process with Human Resources matters.

We are very clear on the potential for conflict of interest with respect to pharmaceutical funding in any aspect of health care. That is why we are vigilant and proactive in this area. In fact, our research agreement with Eli Lilly has raised the bar in Canada for protecting academic freedom.

I hope you find this information helpful in your understanding of our decision-making process. If there are further developments, we will keep you updated.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Garfinkel, MD FRCP (C)
President and CEO



Centre
for Addiction and
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toxicomanie et
de santé mentale

June 8, 2001

To all Centre staff:

As promised, I am writing to share with you another update regarding the situation whereby the Centre rescinded a job offer to Dr. David Healy earlier this year.

As you may recall, news reports inferred that the Centre rescinded the offer of employment to Dr. Healy because of his critical views on Prozac, a drug manufactured by one of the Centre's donor's, Eli Lilly.

This morning, a story appeared in the *Globe and Mail* describing a court case in the U.S. where a pharmaceutical company was held largely responsible in a situation where a man committed murder while taking a popular antidepressant. According to the newspaper report, Dr. Healy's testimony was very important in that case.

The Centre will not respond to the outcome or comments arising from the U.S. court case in which we have no involvement -- and very little information. We stand behind our decision to rescind the job offer to Dr. Healy and wish to reiterate that we have never withdrawn a job offer on the basis of the impact on an outside donor.

Unfortunately, our actions continue to be mischaracterized with the implication that we made the decision to withdraw the offer to Dr. Healy based on outside pressures and/or a concern about donor support in view of Dr. Healy's opinions on Prozac and SSRIs in general. This is absolutely not the case. Instead, our decision was motivated by the fact that Dr. Healy has expressed extreme views that are inconsistent with published scientific evidence. These views go well beyond his peer-reviewed published work, which we were familiar with before his appointment.

No one disputes Dr. Healy's freedom to say whatever he wants in our or any other University or

academic health sciences centre. However, the extreme nature of the views he expressed at his presentation at the Centre on November 30 shocked a disturbing number of future colleagues within the Centre and the University, to the point where the Centre felt that Dr. Healy would not have the necessary respect and support of staff. Hence, the offer was rescinded.

The outcome of the U.S. court case may spark some additional media interest. Also, we are aware of two stories for which I was interviewed prior to today's news report that will be broadcast in the near future. One is scheduled to air this Sunday from (11 a.m. – 12 p.m.) on the CBC's Radio One program, *This Morning* with Michael Enright and the other is a television interview with CBC's Documentary, on The National. The National informed us that the show is expected to air during the week of June 11th, but a firm date has not been set.

Again, we will continue to keep you apprised as needed.

Sincerely,
Paul Garfinkel , MD FRCP (C)
President and CEO