

Touchpoint

February 19, 2010

7071 Bayers Rd., Suite 319A - PO Box 2392, Halifax CRO - Halifax, NS B3J 3E4 - (902) 424.0963 - Toll Free: 1.866.424.0963

Class Action Lawsuit Links Problem Gambling with Parkinson's Drug

Ontario Superior Court Justice George Strathy has approved a class action lawsuit by Parkinson's patients who claim a prescription drug caused their gambling addictions.

A growing body of research links dopamine-agonist drug Permax, used to restore depleted dopamine in the brains of Parkinson's patients, with 'impulse control disorders' including excessive gambling, sex addiction and other compulsive behaviour. Many Canadian and International studies indicate an increased incidence of problem gambling behaviour in patients who take dopamine agonists.

The lead plaintiff in the Permax lawsuit is Swapan Banerjee, an Ontario man who developed a serious problem with gambling after being prescribed Permax in 2000. As stated by the *National Post*, Banerjee's legal statements indicate that he gambled "indiscriminately and relentlessly," losing \$200,000 to casinos, video lottery terminals, lotteries and the stock market. When Mr. Banerjee stopped taking Permax in 2003, his gambling problem ceased.

To date, three dozen Parkinson's patients have signed up with the Canadian class action suit against Permax. All suffered devastating financial losses as a result of their gambling addictions, some well into six figures.

Permax was recalled in 2007 due to unrelated side effects but Mirapex and ReQuip, two dopamine-agonist drugs also linked with impulse control problems, are still on the market in Canada. A similar class action lawsuit has been launched in the United States against Mirapex.

Mary Hatcher, Executive Director, Parkinson Society Maritime Region, responds:

Since assuming my role at the Parkinson Society Maritime Region in June of 2009, I've become anecdotally aware that some Maritimers living with Parkinson's may have developed difficulties in regards to compulsive behaviors. I'm also sensitive to the fact that many individuals in such circumstances are reluctant to share this type of problem.

I appreciate the NSGF's acknowledgement of and concern with this problem and how it may affect Maritimers living with Parkinson's. I hope that by bringing this issue to light more individuals and their loved ones are made aware that it exists and that they can/should be reaching out for help.

 Parkinson Society Maritime Region
Société Parkinson Régional Maritime

www.parkinsonmaritimes.ca

Community Project Reminder:

'Statements of Intent' are due February 26, 2010.

www.nsgamingfoundation.org/pages/Community-Projects.aspx

Until next time,
Jen Wheatley

 Nova Scotia
Gaming Foundation