

Brief review of "Second Opinion" in "What Doctors Don't Tell You", October 2003:14:7

Margaret Williams 12th October 2003

Dr John Diamond is based in New York and is a founding member of The Royal College of Psychiatrists. The extract in the October 2003 issue of "What Doctors Don't Tell You" is taken from his new book "Facets of a Diamond" (Enchantment Books, 2003).

The ME community might wish to be aware of the publication "What Doctors Don't Tell You". The website is www.wddty.co.uk

John Diamond's feature is called "The 'flight into health' " and the following quotations are taken from his article:

"I am no longer a psychiatrist. I renounce it because I believe cruelty is at the core of the profession.

"In my early days in the field, the head psychiatrist of a hospital took me aside, placed his arm around me paternally and offered to teach me the first lesson of private practice psychiatry.... 'If they are not better (after a couple of weeks), certify them to a mental hospital. That way you will have no trouble'.

"The head of another psychiatric hospital was even crueller.....the treatment, (he said), was to 'encourage (the female patient's) flight into health'.

"By this, he meant that the staff – both junior doctors and nurses—were encouraged to do everything possible to humiliate her, to shame her, to embarrass her, to belittle her - -- anything and everything to abuse her, to inflict minor acts of cruelty on her. Even worse, they were encouraged to think of her with cruelty.

"I do not mean to say that all psychiatrists are cruel. Rather, I believe that there is something inherent in the profession that tends to bring out any cruelty lurking within.

"I have long wondered why this profession --- which ought to be so compassionate – has, it seems to me, turned its back on humanity. It is deaf to the anguished pleas for help from its patients.

"Displayed before him, the psychiatrist can choose to comfort, or not. The choice is his.

“So often, regardless of whatever superficial reason he may give, the choice is really whether or not to be cruel to the helpless victim before him.

“Psychiatry should be at the forefront of all the therapies. If it proclaimed the supreme importance of love as the greatest therapy, then the profession could not tolerate cruelty within it -- and would then attract a different type of doctor to enter into it”.