

## COLIN'S COLUMN



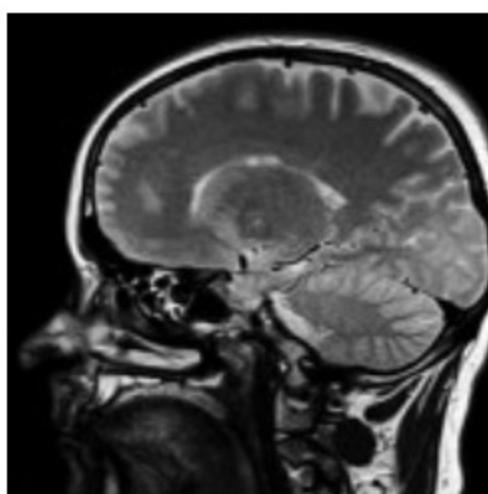
### ECT AND CTE

#### THE NFL, SHOCK TREATMENT AND BRAIN DAMAGE

June 7, 2016

Your brain is safer in a car accident than in the hands of a psychiatrist.

On September 30, 2014, researchers with Boston University [announced](#) that in autopsies of 79 brains of former NFL players, 76 had tested positive for CTE, chronic traumatic encephalopathy, "the signature disease of football". (Encephalopathy is defined as disease, damage or malfunction of the brain.) CTE is a degenerative disease found in people who have had a severe or repeated blows to the head, concussions. According to the Center for Disease Control, CTE is associated with a wide range of functional short- or long-term changes affecting thinking, sensation, language, or emotions.



One former NFL player, with CTE-like symptoms, [complains](#) of bouts of amnesia, dizziness and sudden mood changes. Another [says](#) he can't remember his daughter participating in youth soccer league for a summer, even though she played several games. The wife of one former player who died at 50, [said](#) her husband, who would always celebrate Christmas like an overgrown kid, would spend Christmas mornings sitting in a corner, "just observing. The kids would bring him presents, and he would just sit there. You saw parts of this man disappear, but you couldn't put your finger on it." Another former player, who committed suicide in 2012, [lost](#) his ability to focus, organize his thoughts and relate to people.

In June 2015, a federal judge approved a class-action [lawsuit](#) settlement between the NFL and thousands of former players. The agreement provides up to \$5 million per retired player for serious medical conditions associated with repeated head trauma.

All of these symptoms — amnesia, dizziness, mood changes, inability to focus, disorganized thoughts, unable to relate to people — are marks of CTE and signs of brain damage.

These are also the very same symptoms of patients who have received ECT (electroconvulsive "therapy"), more commonly known as shock "therapy". In other words, athletes who have experienced countless head injuries and concussions from the brutally violent sport of football suffer the same life-crippling and debilitating brain damage as the unfortunate patients of ECT, who placed their health and sanity in the hands of psychiatrists. ECT causes CTE.

One former patient [reported](#) "ECT was initially 'effective' for me, but my improvement would not last three days. So I was shocked again. I have severe, persistent and disabling side effects, including a profound loss of memory affecting more than ten years before ECT. I am unable to return to my legal career, having forgotten my previous jobs and much of my legal education. I no longer recognize many close friends."

A nurse [wrote](#) that a friend "had 12 ECT treatments in Sept – Oct 1989. As a result, he has retrograde and anterograde amnesia and is unable to perform his work as a master plumber, cannot remember his childhood and cannot remember how to get around the city he has lived all his life. You can imagine his anger and frustration."

There was [this](#) 2007 malpractice suit victory against a doctor who referred his patient for ECT: "On November 13, they met again and Dr. Schnackenberg noted (patient) had 'continued difficulty' with her memory and that she was unable to function at work or home. Additionally, (patient) was losing weight and unable to sleep. On November 30, Dr. Lewkowiec observed (patient) continued 'to be confused and disoriented'. At this point, (patient) decided to stop the ECT because she was 'completely unable to function'."

And this year in England a doctor who had received twenty-one sessions of ECT [stated](#): "By the time I finished ECT I was left with memory problems, an inability to recognise faces or to navigate. Toward the end my hands shook, I couldn't walk in a straight line and I fell over repeatedly. I couldn't walk through door frames. My speech was slurred and I had word finding problems."

Factually, you'd be better off getting a concussion from a head injury than receiving one session of ECT. For the typical ECT patient, one session of shock "therapy" consists of a series of electric pulses to the brain, or numerous head injuries in rapid succession.

In 1983 a neurologist published his views on ECT's brain-damaging effects in a [letter](#) to the editor of a professional journal:

"I have seen many patients after ECT, and I have no doubt that ECT produces effects identical to those of head injury. After multiple sessions of ECT, a patient has symptoms identical to those of a retired, punch-drunk boxer.

"After one session of ECT, the symptoms are the same as those of concussion (including retrograde and anterograde amnesia). After a few sessions of ECT, the symptoms are those of a moderate cerebral contusion, and further enthusiastic use of ECT may result in the patient functioning at a subhuman level."

Look up the risks of ECT on the American Psychiatric Association [website](#) and you will find no mention of long-term amnesia, inability to recognize friends or saying goodbye to one's career — let alone permanent brain damage. In fact, the word "brain" does not appear anywhere in the risk warning.

Somatics, LLC, the self-proclaimed "leader in ECT innovation and sales", uses [ambiguous language](#) to conceal the truth, and avoids committing itself to answering the question of ECT causing brain damage: "The available evidence speaks strongly against the possibility".

Thousands of former NFL players brought a successful class action lawsuit to the NFL for CTE. Now is the time for the hundreds of thousands of brain-damaged victims of ECT to do the same against the manufacturers of ECT machines and the American Psychiatric Association.

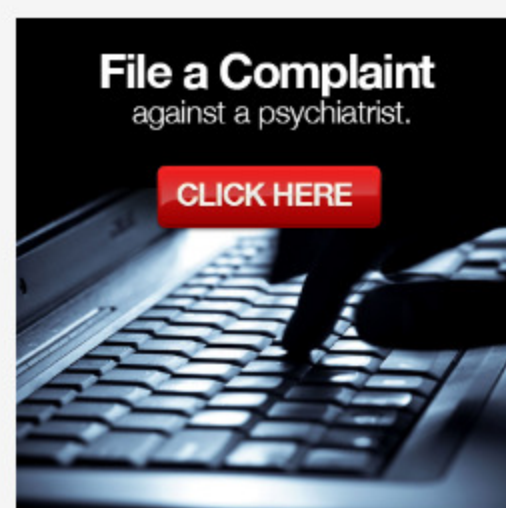
ECT causes CTE. Shock therapy causes brain damage.

Colin Taufer  
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Welcome to my monthly PsychSearch column, Colin's Column. I am a career educator, writer and lifelong advocate for human rights. With each article, I hope to shine a light into the dark world of psychiatry to make stronger champions of human rights, to stir into action, to enlighten. As always, I appreciate feedback from readers. I can be reached at [colinscolumn@gmail.com](mailto:colinscolumn@gmail.com)

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