



**CONCERN** Psychiatrist David Healy

## Only drugs firms can tell us truth

### THE EXPERT

DAVID HEALY

AN expert psychiatrist believes the true effects of the current strain of antidepressants will be shrouded in secrecy until pharmaceutical companies have a new drug to sell.

David Healy, a professor of psychiatry at Bangor University, Wales, has been studying the effects of withdrawal from antidepressants for 15 years.

He said: "If David Cameron got hooked on them there would be action. A very high-profile case of someone credible always works to bring about change but apart from that we will need to wait until pharmaceutical companies have a new drug before they will start to discredit the current ones."

Healy said most doctors would shy away from giving drugs they know to be harmful.

But he said: "There is a lack of access to the clinical trials data which would allow doctors to see what these drugs actually do.

"Doctors just prescribe these drugs without batting an eye. Their reasoning is, if they are approved by the regulator they must be OK."

Healy said in terms of hazardous effects, those of benzodiazepines are much better known than the current antidepressants - selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs).

He said: "The reason doctors don't know SSRIs are harmful is that the industry doesn't have a new group of drugs to push out there."

The real problem, however, he said is that most doctors don't believe in withdrawal syndrome.

He said: "What happens is if a person or their doctor tries to take them off the pills they run into withdrawal problems and the doctors say that is your original problem coming back again. They don't recognise them as withdrawal."

Healy is involved with [RXISK.org](http://RXISK.org) where you can view a range of risks for all drugs from heart drugs to antidepressants.