

February 22, 1972

Dear Dr. Platcow,

I have read the section on antidepressants carefully. It is quite good, and my few comments are listed in the margins.

I would suggest that the sections related to the presumed effectiveness of the MAOI be reviewed, for the available data is chiefly uncontrolled testimonials. The list of dangers is well documented, however, and the contrast sufficiently great for us to have eschewed the use of these drugs in our treatment programs. Indeed, the risks are as great as with the amphetamines, and perhaps the same cautionary tones should be encouraged.

Recent evaluations of convulsive therapy, particularly with the modification of unilateral ECT, with succinylcholine and Brevital, show this technique to be 80-90% effective (and safe) in severe depressive states. Perhaps the Council should review the whole range of therapies listed under 'antidepressants', and introduce a section on ECT. This treatment is surely more effective and safer than the amphetamines or MAOI. For a recent comprehensive review, see the February issue of *Seminars in Psychiatry*, published by Grune & Stratton.

Finally, may I ask that you acknowledge the little help these notes may give in the list of acknowledgements? Many thanks.

Sincerely yours,

Max Fink, M.D.  
Professor of Psychiatry