Deconstructing Mental Illness through Pharmaceutical Advertisements

**Paper details:**

In this paper, you will rely on course materials and outside sources to apply a sociological perspective to illness through analyzing a pharmaceutical advertisement. As you may know, pharmaceutical advertisements are prevalent in the US media. Just flip open a magazine or turn on the television, and you will be exposed to pharmaceutical ads to treat conditions ranging from depression to premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) to social anxiety disorder to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) to countless other disorders. Find a fairly recent advertisement (2008 or later) in a magazine for a condition that has been medicalized in recent years. In other words, do not look for advertisements aimed at treated diseases such as cancer, diabetes, or cardiovascular disease (CVD). Be sure to choose an ad that you can scan (or email a link). Feel free to use current commercials or pharmaceutical advertisements online (e.g., youtube videos). Please provide the source if you use an online version. After finding which drug advertisement you want to use, apply a sociological framework to illustrate how this ad contributes to medicalization and the construction of illness for the targeted disorder. In an essay format, answer the following questions: To start, what is the name of the drug being advertised and what disorder is it supposed to treat? What is the history of this disorder? Using course materials or outside sources, illustrate the medicalization of this disorder. When was this disorder medicalized? What factors were salient to the medicalization of this disorder? Using data from reliable sources (such as CDC), illustrate in detail trends in the disorder being targeted. Be sure to include trends over time as well as trends according to race/ethnicity, sex, age, and social class (education, income, occupation). Where did you find this advertisement? Who is the target audience for this media? Be sure to include demographic information on the readership for this publication. Using evidence based reasoning and available data on this disorder (from non‐industry groups, like CDC), explain why you think the advertised drug to treat a specific disorder is being targeted at a specific group. What is the history of this drug? Has it been used to treat other disorders? Describe the ad. What visual images are used? What words pop out on the page? Explain in detail how these words or images contribute to the construction of illness for the disorder and the message being conveyed to readers. What does the visual imagery of the ad tell you about illness experiences related to the disorder? What does the advertisement tell you about who is being targeted for this advertisement? Be sure to incorporate how race/ethnicity, age, class, and gender are relevant to the illness construction being presented in the ad. Provide a comprehensive analysis of how the social sources of illness are related to this disorder and the pharmaceutical therapy being advertised to treat this disorder. Pharmaceutical treatments are rarely considered a panacea for a number of disorders and carry with them a number of side effects that can adversely affect a person’s health. With that in mind, what is not being communicated in the ad about other ways to treat this disorder? Are there social approaches to treating this disorder that are overlooked in the ad? Be sure to elaborate on other potential approaches for this disorder in detail. Finally, provide a comprehensive conclusion to this essay that demonstrates the sociological perspective you have applied to the advertisement. Be sure to incorporate concepts, such as medicalization, stigma, social power, and social sources of illness throughout your essay. You must also cite sources you use for this essay. PLEASE NOTE: Your paper should be double spaced, with one‐inch margins, and free of grammatical or spelling errors. Do not use quotes from outside sources when you can put these ideas into your own words. Quotes should be used sparingly at most.