

Submission Mental Health Productivity Commission

The idea of screening and drugging children 0-3 is unthinkable.

Because a child doesn't fit into a bunch of screening questions does not then mean they are prone to mental health issues. Sometimes you have to look further and investigate a little. Look at the child's diet, sleep, exercise, screen time and environmental factors. To give a child this young a drug is only masking the underlying problem, this is if there is an actual present time issue, not some future maybe.

Doing the screening with children will potentially lead to misdiagnosis and unnecessary drugging.

Screening children at these ages is open to so many variables. Let's say you start screening a child and they appear agitated. Ok so look when did they last eat? Are they hungry? Do they just have an upset? It could go on and on. Then I am sure the questions will be asked of the parent. Imagine a mum with a new born baby tired hungry and exhausted. You are not going to get straight accurate answers.

Sometimes kids just need to be kids. When there is a child with a behavioural issue look at all the things connected to that child. Drugs are not and should never ever be the first answer. Sometime I am sure it appears to be the easiest and the best because the doctor said so. But that child relies on their parents to do their absolute best for them. And sometimes it isn't the simple or easier thing. Sometimes you need to look and try different things to see just what the triggers are or what is causing it. Again I go back to sleep, diet, exercise, education, discipline and environment.

I don't say that depression does exist but I don't believe a drug is the cure. At the base of that depression is something. That something needs to be found in order for the depression to truly resolve. This is the same with behavioural/mental issues with kids. Drugs are not the answer and cure all.