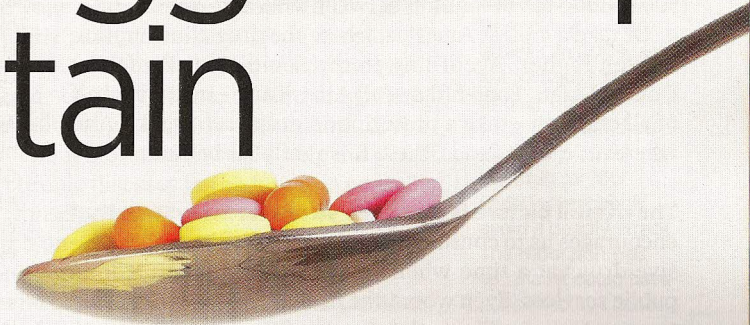


How did we get to the point where £22m is spent on prescribing drugs—*every day*? In the first of a four-part special, **Jerome Burne** launches our campaign to tackle

Drugged-Up Britain



When 54-year-old John arrived at a nutritional clinic in south London, he was in a bad way. Overweight, with chronic hip pain due to osteoarthritis, he also suffered from migraines, heartburn and severe mood swings. For the last six months, he'd been taking five or six different drugs a day—mostly painkillers, but also one for migraine and another to reduce acid in his stomach.

“Sometimes it was really hard to get up the energy to go to work,” he says. “All the pills made me feel woozy. They obviously weren’t going to cure me; they just dulled the pain. The doctor said I should lose some weight, but eating was about the only pleasure I had left.”

Aspects of John’s situation will be familiar to many of us. You’ve got backache or your guts are upset; maybe ▶

