Chronic anxiety and depression aren’t always as easy to spot in the real world as they are in a Woody Allen movie.

I got my first job at a magazine. The meds were the springboard—my life was something I had to work for. I don’t mean to say that publicity has no place in raising awareness about diseases, just that drug manufacturers owe it to the public to make pills seem less like fast-acting magic beans. Chronic anxiety and depression aren’t always as easy to spot in the real world as they are in a Woody Allen movie, and chemicals aren’t the exclusive solution. The commercials don’t acknowledge that. Instead, they just list symptoms implying that every cranky, overworked person should get a prescription. Chronic anxiety for everyone! Of course, the ads end with a quick voice-over stating that prescription Paxil is not for everyday anxiety. If it’s not, then why not explain what it is for? Remind people that therapy can help. Talk about the importance of family support. Get rid of the stigma.

Can all this really be done in less than a minute? Probably not. But it wouldn’t hurt if the drug companies at least tried to inject some realism into their soft-focus minidramas. Although commercials might be the quickest way to introduce new products and ideas to the public, they may not be the best venue for explaining major medical problems. That’s what watching documentaries—or heck, even ER—is for.

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[REALITY CHECK]

size doesn’t (always) matter

**Myth:** A man’s shoe size is a clue to what he’s packing in his pants.

**Reality:** Stop staring at his feet. Two urologists in Britain recently measured the stretched penises of 104 men, compared the lengths to their loafers, and found no correlation.

[NOT-SO-HOT DOT]

At MyBrainTrainer.com, you can sign up for one- to three-minute mental exercises to improve your memory and concentration. Sounds like fun, but at $19.95 for a four-month membership, we think folks with real brainpower will hang on to their cash and read a book instead.