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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

CLAUDIA HERRERA AND PETER  
LOWRY,

Plaintiffs,

v.

ELI LILLY AND COMPANY, an Indiana  
Corporation,

Defendant.

CASE NO. 2:13-cv-02702-SVW-MAN

ORDER DENYING DEFENDANT’S  
MOTION FOR SUMMARY  
JUDGMENT [120]

**I. INTRODUCTION**

This products liability action arises from plaintiff Claudia Herrera’s (“Herrera”) alleged “discontinuation” symptoms upon ceasing to take Cymbalta—defendant Eli Lilly and Company’s (“Lilly”) serotonin norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor (“SNRI”). On April 17, 2013, Herrera sued Lilly in federal court. (Dkt. 1.) Herrera and her husband, plaintiff Peter Lowry (“Lowry”), allege that Lilly failed to adequately warn of the risk and severity of discontinuation side effects upon discontinuing Cymbalta. Much of this claim hinges on whether the Cymbalta label’s statement that “the following symptoms occurred at a rate greater than or equal to 2%” means that the ensuing list of symptoms occurred in the aggregate at a rate greater than or equal

1 to 2% or that each listed symptom occurred at that rate.

2 In their Complaint, Plaintiffs assert causes of action for: (1) negligence; (2) strict product  
3 liability—design defect; (3) strict product liability—failure to warn; (4) “strict product liability”;  
4 (5) negligent misrepresentation; (6) fraud; (7) breach of implied warranty; (8) violation of  
5 California’s Unfair Competition Law (“UCL”), Bus. & Prof. Code §§ 17200, *et seq.*; and (9) loss  
6 of consortium. (Dkt. 1.) However, Plaintiffs have abandoned their claims for strict  
7 liability—design defect, breach of implied warranty, violation of the UCL, and for loss of  
8 consortium. (Dkt. 186.)

9 Presently before the Court are Lilly’s motion for summary judgment (dkt. 120), Lilly’s  
10 motion to exclude the expert testimony of Dr. Joseph Glenmullen (“Glenmullen”) (dkt. 138),  
11 Lilly’s supplemental motion to exclude Glenmullen’s expert testimony (dkt. 273), and Lilly’s  
12 motion to exclude expert Dr. Louis Morris’s (“Morris”) testimony (dkt 139). As discussed in  
13 more detail below, much has happened in this case since these motions were filed. After several  
14 hearings, the filing of a motion for sanctions, and a round of supplemental briefing, the Court  
15 learned of allegedly new evidence not presented in connection with the instant motion for  
16 summary judgment. This evidence raises questions regarding, *inter alia*, whether  
17 discontinuation symptoms can be avoided by tapering off Cymbalta, Lilly’s knowledge  
18 regarding whether tapering diminishes the risk of discontinuation symptoms, and whether Lilly  
19 deliberately designed Cymbalta’s clinical trials in a way calculated to under-report the risk of  
20 discontinuation symptoms. Plaintiffs assert that Lilly either improperly asserted privilege over  
21 the relevant documents or buried them in a massive “document dump” produced in the last week  
22 of discovery.

23 For the reasons discussed below, the Court DENIES Lilly’s motion for summary  
24 judgment and DECLINES TO REACH the motions to exclude Glenmullen and Morris.

25 **II. STATEMENT OF FACTS**

26 **A. Cymbalta’s Background**

27 On August 3, 2004, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (“FDA”) approved the use of  
28

1 Cymbalta<sup>1</sup> (duloxetine) for the treatment of major depressive disorder. (Def.’s SUF ¶ 1.) The  
2 FDA simultaneously approved the U.S. Physician Package Insert (“label”) for Cymbalta. *Id.*  
3 The Cymbalta label that was FDA approved and in effect in March 2007 included the following  
4 language in the “Precautions” section:

5 Discontinuation symptoms have been systematically evaluated in  
6 patients taking Cymbalta. Following abrupt discontinuation in placebo-  
7 controlled clinical trials of up to 10-weeks duration, the following  
8 symptoms occurred at a rate greater than or equal to 2% and at a  
9 significantly higher rate in either the MDD [major depressive disorder] or  
10 GAD [generalized anxiety disorder] Cymbalta-treated patients compared to  
11 those discontinuing from placebo: dizziness; nausea; headache; paresthesia;  
12 vomiting; irritability; and nightmare.

13 During marketing of other SSRIs [selective serotonin reuptake  
14 inhibitors] and SNRIs . . . , there have been spontaneous reports of adverse  
15 events occurring upon discontinuation of these drugs, particularly when  
16 abrupt, including the following: dysphoric mood, irritability, agitation,  
17 dizziness, sensory disturbances (e.g., paresthesias such as electric shock  
18 sensations), anxiety, confusion, headache, lethargy, emotional lability,  
19 insomnia, hypomania, tinnitus, and seizures. Although these events are  
20 generally self-limiting, some have been reported to be severe.

21 Patients should be monitored for these symptoms when  
22 discontinuing treatment with Cymbalta. A gradual reduction in the dose  
23 rather than abrupt cessation is recommended whenever possible. If  
24 intolerable symptoms occur following a decrease in the dose or upon  
25 discontinuation of treatment, then resuming the previous prescribed dose  
26 may be considered. Subsequently, the physician may continue decreasing  
27 the dose but at a more gradual rate.

28 (Def.’s SUF ¶ 2.) The 2007 Cymbalta label also included the following language in the “Dosage  
and Administration” section:

Symptoms associated with discontinuation of Cymbalta and other  
SSRIs and SNRIs have been reported (see PRECAUTIONS). Patients  
should be monitored for these symptoms when discontinuing treatment. A  
gradual reduction in the dose rather than abrupt cessation is recommended  
whenever possible. If intolerable symptoms occur following a decrease in  
the dose or upon discontinuation of treatment, then resuming the previously  
prescribed dose may be considered. Subsequently, the physician may  
continue decreasing the dose but at a more gradual rate.

(Def.’s SUF ¶ 3.)

Though Cymbalta’s label recommends tapering, it does not provide specific  
parameters—such as timeframe or dosage increments— for designing an appropriate taper

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<sup>1</sup> As noted above, Cymbalta is an SNRI. (Def.’s SUF ¶ 1.)

1 regime. (Paley Decl., Ex. 9.) The label also states that Cymbal “should be swallowed whole and  
2 should not be chewed or crushed, nor should the contents be sprinkled on food or mixed with  
3 liquids.” (Pls.’ RFF ¶ 50.) Lilly manufactures Cymbalta in 20 milligram, 30 milligram, and 60  
4 milligram delayed release capsules. (*Id.*)

5 **B. The 2005 Journal of Affective Disorders Article**

6 In 2005, the Journal of Affective Disorders published an article called “Symptoms  
7 Following Abrupt Discontinuation of Duloxetine Treatment in Patients with Major Depressive  
8 Disorder” (the “2005 JAD Article”). (Def.’s SUF ¶ 5.) Three of the 2005 JAD Article’s  
9 authors—David G. Perahia, Daniel Kajdasz, and Durisala Desai—were Lilly employees. (*Id.*)  
10 The article reported data arising from nine clinical trials that Lilly funded, designed and  
11 conducted. (Def.’s SUF ¶ 6.) In all of the studies, Cymbalta was abruptly discontinued. (Paley  
12 Decl., Ex. 10, at 208.) After discontinuation there was a 1 or 2 week lead-out phase to allow for  
13 the collection of discontinuation-emergent adverse events (“DEAEs”) at a set time after  
14 discontinuation. (*Id.*) DEAEs were elicited by non-probing inquiry and were rated as mild,  
15 moderate, or severe. (*Id.*)

16 The 2005 JAD Article reports that in short-term, placebo-controlled studies,  
17 “[s]ignificantly more duloxetine-treated patients (44.3%) reported at least 1 DEAE than placebo-  
18 treated patients (22.9%), with dizziness being the most common symptom.” (*Id.*; Def.’s SUF ¶  
19 8.) The Article reports that 39.8% of the reported events were mild, 50.6 % were moderate, and  
20 9.6% were severe. (Def.’s SUF ¶ 9.) Of the DEAEs reported, 53.7% were unresolved as of the  
21 final contact with the patient (either 1 or 2 weeks after discontinuation). (Paley Decl., Ex. 10, at  
22 275.) The Article also includes a table relaying the incidence of specific discontinuation  
23 symptoms as follows:

Event	Placebo (N = 380; n (%))	Duloxetine (Cymbalta) (N = 490; n (%))
Patients with $\geq 1$ event	87 (22.9)	217 (44.3)*
Dizziness	3 (0.8)	61 (12.4)*
Nausea	1 (0.3)	29 (5.9)*

1	Headache NOS	3 (0.8)	26 (5.3)*
2	Paraesthesia	1 (0.3)	14 (2.9)*
3	Diarrhea NOS	3 (0.8)	11 (2.2)
4	Vomiting NOS	2 (0.5)	12 (2.4)*
5	Irritability	1 (0.3)	12 (2.4)*
6	Insomnia	2 (0.5)	10 (2.0)
7	Nightmare	0 (0.0)	10 (2.0)*

8 NOS = not otherwise specified.

9 \*  $P < 0.05$  vs. placebo, Fisher's Exact Test.

10 (Paley Decl., Ex. 10, at 276.)<sup>2</sup>

11 The Article also reports that in the long-term, placebo-controlled studies, “[s]ignificantly  
12 more duloxetine-treated patients reported at least 1 DEAE (9.1%) than did placebo-treated  
13 patients (2.0%) with dizziness being the most common symptom[.]” (Paley Decl., Ex. 10, at 210;  
14 Def.’s SUF ¶ 10.) The Article reports that of the 34 reported DEAEs in those studies, 70.6%  
15 were mild, 26.5% were moderate, and 1 event (2.9%) was severe. (Def.’s SUF ¶ 11.) The  
16 Article also includes a table relaying the incidence of specific discontinuation symptoms after  
17 long-term treatment occurring in at least two duloxetine-treated patients as follows<sup>3</sup>:

18	Event	Placebo (N = 101; n (%))	Duloxetine (Cymbalta) (N = 242; n (%))
19	Patients with $\geq 1$ DEAE	2 (2.0)	22 (9.1)*
20	Dizziness	1 (1.0)	8 (3.3)
21	Anxiety	0 (0.0)	2 (0.8)
22	Headache NOS	0 (0.0)	2 (0.8)
23	Irritability	0 (0.0)	2 (0.8)

24  
25 <sup>2</sup> The Court notes that in the related action of *Hexum et al. v. Eli Lilly and Co.*, No. 2:13-cv-2701,  
26 Lilly submitted evidence showing that alongside its 2001 New Drug Approval application Lilly  
27 submitted to the FDA nearly identical data to that disclosed in this table. (2701 Dkt. 153-1: Paley  
28 Decl. in Supp. of Def.’s Summ. J. Reply (“Paley Supp. Reply Decl. re Hexum”) ¶ 6; Paley Supp.  
Reply Decl. re Hexum, Ex. 19, at 112–20.)

<sup>3</sup> The Court notes that the 2005 JAD Article also includes columns separating out this data by the  
dose from which the duloxetine-treated patients discontinued.

Nausea	0 (0.0)	2 (0.8)
Vomiting NOS	0 (0.0)	2 (0.8)

NOS = not otherwise specified.

\*  $P < 0.05$  vs. placebo, Fisher's Exact Test.

(Paley Decl., Ex. 10, at 276.)

Finally, the Article reports that in the uncontrolled 52-week open label study, 50.8% of patients reported at least 1 DEAE with dizziness being the most common. (Paley Decl., Ex. 10, at 210; Def.'s SUF ¶ 12.) Of these DEAEs, 36.6% were mild, 46.3% were moderate, and 17.2% were severe. (Paley Decl., Ex. 10, at 210; Def.'s SUF ¶ 13.) The Article also includes a table relating the incidence of specific discontinuation symptoms for which the incidence was at least 2% as follows:

Event	Duloxetine (Cymbalta) (N = 553; n (%))
Patients with $\geq 1$ DEAE	281 (50.8)
Dizziness (excluding vertigo)	106 (19.2)
Anxiety NEC	55 (9.9)
Nausea	54 (9.8)
Headache NOS	40 (7.2)
Insomnia	37 (6.7)
Irritability	33 (6.0)
Vomiting NOS	24 (4.3)
Nightmare	16 (2.9)
Paraesthesia	16 (2.9)
Tinnitus	16 (2.0)
Crying	15 (2.7)
Depressed mood	15 (2.7)
Depression NOS	15 (2.7)
Anorexia	14 (2.5)
Diarrhea NOS	14 (2.5)
Myalgia	13 (2.4)

1 Tremor	12 (2.2)
2 Nervousness	11 (2.0)

3 NEC = not elsewhere classified; NOS = not otherwise specified.

4 (Paley Decl., Ex. 10, at 277.)

5 **C. Herrera's Use and Discontinuation of Cymbalta**

6 Around 2006 or 2007, Herrera<sup>4</sup> began experiencing depression on two or three days per  
7 month. (Def.'s SUF ¶ 16.) At the same time she also began experiencing anxiety that hindered  
8 her ability to perform at work. (*Id.*) Herrera also has a self-diagnosed history of trichotillomania  
9 (compulsively pulling out one's hair), which she asserts began at age 12. (Wisner Decl., Ex. 5,  
10 at 162:24–163:19.) Herrera's general practitioner, Dr. Mark Braunstein<sup>5</sup> ("Braunstein"),  
11 prescribed Wellbutrin to treat her depression.<sup>6</sup> (Def.'s SUF ¶ 19.) According to Herrera,  
12 Wellbutrin was ineffective. (*Id.*) Braunstein prescribed Cymbalta for Herrera around March  
13 2007. (Def.'s SUF ¶ 20.) Herrera does not recall what Braunstein told her about the risks of  
14 taking Cymbalta. (Wisner Decl., Ex. 5, at 113:8–15.) When asked whether she recalls what  
15 Braunstein told her about discontinuing Cymbalta, Herrera testified that "[w]e never discussed  
16 the stopping of the drug—of the drug. I don't remember." (*Id.* at 115:3–6.) She also testified  
17 that she did not discuss Cymbalta discontinuation or Cymbalta tapering with Braunstein. (*Id.* at  
18 170:12–18.) The only written material that Braunstein provided to Herrera regarding Cymbalta  
19

20 <sup>4</sup> The Court notes that Herrera testified that as of the date of her deposition she suffered from  
21 memory loss. (Wisner Decl., Ex. 5, at 39:10–13.) Herrera's deposition indicates that she can't  
22 remember some of the events at issue in this case—such as what Braunstein told her about  
23 Cymbalta's risks. (Wisner Decl., Ex. 5, at 94:5–20; 113: 8–12.) Plaintiffs thus face substantial  
hurdles regarding Herrera's credibility. Nevertheless, the Court may not and does not reach those  
credibility issues upon consideration of the instant motion for summary judgment.

24 <sup>5</sup> The Court notes that in his deposition, Braunstein had limited recollection of Herrera and his  
25 treatment of her depression. *See, e.g.*, (Wisner Decl., Ex. 1, 44:10–45:20) (discussing  
26 Braunstein's limited memory of Herrera). The difficulties caused by Braunstein's forgetfulness  
27 are compounded by the unavailability of his medical records pertaining to Herrera. While  
Braunstein's inability to remember Herrera might impact his credibility (which the Court does not  
here consider), it does not render his testimony inadmissible. Except where otherwise noted,  
Braunstein's testimony is not overly speculative; in his deposition he testified to the best of his  
recollection or attested to his general practices.

28 <sup>6</sup> Herrera's pharmacy records also indicate that a different doctor prescribed Zoloft and  
Wellbutrin for her in 2001. (Paley Decl., Ex. 7.)

1 was the package insert, which was included with the Cymbalta samples that he gave her. (*Id.* at  
2 113:16–20; 114:23–115:24.) Herrera asserts that she read this information to the best of her  
3 ability. (*Id.* at 113:21–25.)

4 Although Braunstein is a general practitioner, he asserts that from 2001 to 2010 close to  
5 50% of his practice was comprised of patients who he was following for psychiatric conditions.  
6 (Paley Decl., Ex. 2, at 23:9–20.) Braunstein prescribed Cymbalta to “many” patients prior to  
7 prescribing Cymbalta to Herrera. (Paley Decl., Ex. 2, at 117:20–118:2.) According to  
8 Braunstein, he learned of the need to taper off of antidepressants twenty years ago as part of his  
9 basic psychopharmacology training (though the antidepressants he studied then were not SSRIs or  
10 SNRIs). (*Id.* at 131:10–21.) Additionally, based on the Cymbalta materials provided to him in  
11 2007, Braunstein then knew that a “significant number of people” had unpleasant withdrawal  
12 symptoms from Cymbalta upon abrupt withdrawal.<sup>7</sup> (*Id.* at 73:11–24.) Because of this  
13 knowledge, Braunstein always warns people that they can’t abruptly stop taking Cymbalta—they  
14 need to taper it instead. (*Id.* at 73:19–23.) Thus, while Braunstein doesn’t recall his  
15 conversation with Herrera, he testified that he believes that he probably warned her that she  
16 couldn’t abruptly stop taking Cymbalta but would need to taper it. (*Id.* at 74:1–3.) At the time  
17 he prescribed Cymbalta to Herrera, Braunstein would have had a “working knowledge” of the  
18 information contained in Cymbalta’s product label and would have relied (at least in part) on the  
19 information therein. (*Id.* at 54:14–55:5.)

20 When asked to explain the meaning of the Cymbalta label’s language that “the following  
21 symptoms occurred at a rate greater than or equal to 1 percent,”<sup>8</sup> Braunstein said that it means  
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23 <sup>7</sup> Notwithstanding the foregoing, Braunstein also testified that he did not become aware of the  
24 extent of the withdrawal syndrome from Cymbalta that he knew of on the date of his deposition  
25 until two years prior (sometime in 2012). (Paley Decl., Ex. 2, at 151:11–25.) He then went on to  
26 clarify that the thing he was surprised to learn was that Cymbalta was supposedly  
27 “addictive”—which Braunstein uses to mean that some people supposedly can’t discontinue  
28 Cymbalta at all because of the extreme severity of their discontinuation side effects. (*Id.* at  
153:2–154:2.) Braunstein thus uses the word “addictive” to mean something other than causing  
discontinuation side effects. (*Id.*)

<sup>8</sup> Counsel apparently read to Braunstein the wrong version of the label. Regardless, the only  
difference between this portion of the labels is the use of 1% or 2%—which is immaterial to the  
present analysis.



1 “exactly what it says, that it could be equal to 1 percent rate or much higher[.]” (*Id.* at  
2 137:13–25.) He also testified that he understands the phrase “at a significantly higher rate in  
3 duloxetine-treated patients compared to those discontinuing from placebo” to mean that “it’s a  
4 lot higher rate, but they don’t tell you how much higher.” (*Id.* at 137:5–12.) Braunstein testified  
5 that he did not see or receive the 2005 JAD Article prior to his 2014 deposition. (*Id.* at  
6 158:17–161:3.) He also testified that he doesn’t remember if he had seen the data reflected in  
7 the 2005 JAD Article in 2007, but that:

8 the numbers sound like—the 44% of patients having withdrawal symptoms  
9 sounds . . . not like what [he] would have known back then; that so many  
10 lasted two weeks or longer . . . [he] had seen it, but [he doesn’t] know that  
11 [he] knew it was 10 %. [He] might have thought it was lower than that at  
12 two weeks and later of actual withdrawal symptoms, not re-emergence of  
13 underlying symptoms.

14 (*Id.* at 74:7–15.) He further testified that this was an important distinction. (*Id.* at 74:17.) He  
15 also testified that if Lilly was aware that the risk of discontinuation side effects was between 44  
16 and 50 percent, then he believes Lilly should have disclosed this information. (*Id.* at 22–24.) He  
17 also testified that while this was a “high number,” he was aware from personal experience “that  
18 these symptoms were common.” (*Id.* at 163:6–16.)

19 Herrera asserts that her depression and anxiety improved within one month of  
20 commencing Cymbalta. (Def.’s SUF ¶ 21.) She took Cymbalta every day from the time she  
21 commenced Cymbalta in 2007 until she discontinued it in 2012. (Wisner Decl., Ex. 5, at  
22 135:12–14.)

23 Around early 2012, Herrera “realized that [she] wasn’t feeling very well for a long time  
24 on Cymbalta.” (Wisner Decl., Ex. 5, at 84:7–11; Def.’s SUF ¶ 38.) She was experiencing  
25 weight gain, lethargy, some anxiety, and was feeling “bluesy” all the time. (Def.’s SUF ¶ 38.)  
26 Herrera asserts that “a bulb went off in [her] head and told [her] it’s time to get off any drugs.”  
27 (*Id.*; Wisner Decl., Ex. 5, at 84:17–19.) She therefore spoke to Dr. Mayur Patel (“Patel”)—a  
28 pulmonologist who was treating Herrera’s mother. (Wisner Decl., Ex. 5, at 79: 9–23, 84:13–22.)  
Though the precise parameters are disputed, it is undisputed that Patel prescribed a tapering  
regimen for Herrera. (Def.’s SUF ¶ 40.) According to Herrera, Patel told her to drop from 60  
milligram to 30 milligram doses of Cymbalta for 30 days, after which she should cease taking

1 any Cymbalta. (Wisner Decl., Ex. 5, at 84:23–85:2.) According to Patel, he told Herrera to take  
2 30 milligrams of Cymbalta per day for three weeks, at which point she should return for a follow  
3 up visit. (Paley Decl. in Supp. of Def.’s Reply (“Second Paley Decl.”), Ex. 14, at 82:13–17.)  
4 Herrera did not return to Patel for the March 1, 2012, visit that was scheduled for her. (Def.’s  
5 SUF ¶ 41.) While taking 30 milligrams of Cymbalta per day, Herrera felt the same as when she  
6 was taking 60 milligrams per day. (Wisner Decl., Ex. 5, at 243:23–244:2.)

7 Herrera discontinued any Cymbalta use on or about March 1, 2012. (Def.’s SUF ¶ 42.)  
8 Herrera asserts that she first felt what she claims were Cymbalta withdrawal symptoms on March  
9 3, 2012. (Wisner Decl., Ex. 5, at 251:19–21.) On March 13, 2012, Herrera returned to Patel’s  
10 office with complaints of depression, anxiety, difficulty sleeping, nausea, and diarrhea. (Def.’s  
11 SUF ¶ 43.) She also complained of having a sensation like she needed to use the restroom.  
12 (Wisner Decl., Ex. 5, at 251:3–14.) In addition to these symptoms, Herrera asserts that she  
13 experienced brain zaps, suicidal ideation, muscle spasms, the sensation of objects crawling in her  
14 skin, hot flashes, body shivers, memory loss, and skin irritation. (Def.’s SUF ¶ 46.)

15 On March 28, 2012, Herrera asked her husband to call Patel and to ask Patel what to do  
16 because her condition wasn’t improving. (Wisener Decl., Ex. 5, 263:1–9.) On that date, Patel  
17 prescribed 30 milligrams of Cymbalta to Herrera. (Def.’s SUF ¶ 44.) Herrera refused to take the  
18 30 milligram dose of Cymbalta that Patel prescribed. (*Id.*) She did not return to Patel’s office  
19 until March 2013. (Def.’s SUF ¶ 45.)

#### 20 **D. Herrera’s Other Medical Conditions<sup>9</sup>**

21 Sometime in 2007 or 2008, Herrera was diagnosed with hypothyroidism. (Wisner Decl.,  
22 Ex. 5, at 206:9–16.) In 2010, Herrera was diagnosed as perimenopausal. (Wisner Decl., Ex. 5,  
23 at 199:19–200:6.) In her June (or July) 2010 intake questionnaire, Herrera indicated that she was  
24 feeling “bluesy”, suffered from hot flashes, had “dry/patchy” skin, had a stiff/heavy head/neck,  
25 had mild back pain, had tingling or numbness (which she asserts plagued her feet and lower legs),  
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27 <sup>9</sup> The Court notes that Plaintiffs dispute the validity of the diagnoses that Herrera received. Thus,  
28 in this section the Court merely describes these diagnoses to provide context for the Court’s  
analysis of the legal issues. The Court does not here decide that Herrera in fact suffered from  
these conditions.

1 had gained weight, had very low energy, was unable to sleep or wake up, had very poor sexual  
2 desire, suffered from lightheadedness or dizzy spells, had headaches, and had changes in her  
3 visual acuity. (*Id.* at 172:9–193:6.) Though Herrera asserts that she doesn’t remember suffering  
4 from memory problems in 2010, she checked the box on the intake form that she completed in  
5 2010 indicating that her memory and concentration were very poor. (*Id.* at 188:13–190:25.)

### 6 **III. PROCEDURAL HISTORY**

7 On February 5, 2015, Lilly filed the instant motion for summary judgment. (Dkt. 120.)  
8 Since then, much has happened in this case.

9 On April 21, 2015, Plaintiffs moved for sanctions against Lilly. (Dkt. 257.) In their  
10 sanctions motion, Plaintiffs asserted that Lilly improperly withheld documents—1,000 of which  
11 were allegedly withheld pursuant to attorney-client privilege—and failed to timely provide an  
12 accurate privilege log. (Dkt. 257: Mot. 1.) On May 18, 2015, the Court ordered Lilly to  
13 produce a revised privilege log by May 26, 2015. (Dkt. 292.) On June 1, 2015, the Court held a  
14 hearing regarding the newly produced privilege log and documents. (Dkt. 295.) On the same  
15 day, the Court granted leave for the parties to file supplemental briefing. (*Id.*)

16 Alongside their supplemental briefing, Plaintiffs submit internal Lilly documents  
17 regarding Cymbalta’s clinical trials, Cymbalta’s approval for the treatment of Generalized  
18 Anxiety Disorder (“GAD”), and similar topics. (Dkt. 300.) Plaintiffs assert that these  
19 documents were previously either improperly withheld, improperly redacted, or were buried in a  
20 “document dump” of thousands of documents that Lilly allegedly produced in the last week of  
21 discovery and provided in a non-native electronic format that was difficult to use.

22 Of particular note: Plaintiffs provide a 2006 email from David Perahia (“Perahia”) to  
23 Michael Detke (“Detke”) and others in which Perahia discusses potential updates to Cymbalta’s  
24 “Medical Beliefs” documents. In the email, Perahia states:

25 [i]n terms of whether the use of a taper reduces the number of reported  
26 DEAEs, data from BU & CQ suggest that it doesn’t while data from HMDD  
27 suggest that it does ! Further, bearing in mind the hazards of comparing  
28 across different types of trials, I don’t think we’re in a position to make a  
data-driven recommendation with regard to dose tapering, although our  
‘official’ position is obviously to recommend tapering.

(Supp. Wisner Decl., Ex. 4.) Plaintiffs also submit excerpts from the HMBR Study Report,

1 which discusses a study of Cymbalta that included a two-week taper period. (Supp. Wisner  
2 Decl., Ex. 5, at 34.) That study found that there was “no statistical significance among the study  
3 drug stopping method (taper compared with abrupt) during the drug-tapering phase.” (*Id.* at  
4 144.)

5 Plaintiffs further submit another 2006 email chain regarding possible revisions to the  
6 proposed Cymbalta label to be submitted with Lilly’s application for FDA approval of Cymbalta  
7 to treat GAD. In an email sent by Richard Bump (“Bump”) to other Lilly personnel after a  
8 meeting regarding the label, Bump says:

9 My point was not so much what events should be included, but concern that  
10 the implication from the wording is that tapering eliminates the risk of  
11 discontinuation symptoms. **None of the individual studies specifically**  
12 **designed to look at this (SUI or GAD) have shown a benefit to taper**  
13 **[sic] compare with abrupt discontinuation.** I just believe the sentence  
14 that concludes the first paragraph is not accurately reflecting the lack of  
15 benefit (or lack thereof) of tapering in studies designed to look at this  
16 specifically.

17 (Supp. Wisner Decl., Ex. 6) (emphasis added). In a later email responding in part to Bump’s  
18 statement, Detke writes:

19 My proposal is that we plan to delete the sentence struck through below.<sup>10</sup>  
20 Overall it strongly implies that tapering substantially improves tolerability,  
21 which does not represent the data accurately. To Rick’s [Bump’s] point, it  
22 (perhaps more weakly) implies that tapering solves all tolerability problems  
23 entirely, which would be an even worse misinterpretation of the actual data.  
24 To Greg’s point today, the last paragraph, second sentence<sup>11</sup> still indicates  
25 that tapering is recommended, and is inconsistent, but I would not  
26 recommend removing it now because 1) it’s from previous class labeling  
27 and not worth the fight, and more importantly 2) it may still help patients to  
28 taper and almost certainly won’t hurt them in the vast majority of clinical  
situations . . .

(*Id.*) Finally, Plaintiffs submit a 2008 email chain between Detke and Teresa S. Williams  
 (“Williams”). Williams was working on clinical trials for a different drug and requested  
 information about the Cymbalta drug trials. In response to Williams’s inquiry about whether  
 Lilly used elicited scales (symptom checklists) during the Cymbalta trials, Detke answers that

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26 <sup>10</sup> That sentence reads “[w]hen patients were tapered over 2 weeks after acute treatment in 9 or  
27 10 week GAD studies, no adverse events met criteria as described above.” (Supp. Wisner Decl.,  
Ex. 6.)

28 <sup>11</sup> That sentence reads “[a] gradual reduction in the dose rather than abrupt cessation is  
recommended whenever possible.” (*Id.*)

1 they did not. (Wisner Decl., Ex. 16.) He then sends a follow-up email one minute later stating  
2 that: “[i]f you use an elicited scale, you’ll see higher rates. This WILL end up in the label.” (*Id.*)

3 In response to Plaintiffs’ latest filing, Lilly asserts that the documents at issue were  
4 largely produced before the close of discovery. In particular, Lilly asserts that Plaintiffs’  
5 Exhibits 4 and 6 were produced in December 2014 (just before the close of discovery). (Jones  
6 Supp. Decl. ¶¶ 5, 7.) Lilly asserts that Plaintiff’s Exhibit 5 was produced in July 2013. (*Id.* at ¶  
7 6.) Finally, Lilly admits that Plaintiff’s Exhibit 16 was not produced to Plaintiffs until April  
8 2015. (*Id.* at ¶ 17.)

#### 9 **IV. MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT**

##### 10 **A. Legal Standard**

11 Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 56 requires summary judgment for the moving party  
12 when the evidence, viewed in the light most favorable to the nonmoving party, shows that there  
13 is no genuine issue as to any material fact, and that the moving party is entitled to judgment as a  
14 matter of law. Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(a); *Tarin v. County of Los Angeles*, 123 F.3d 1259, 1263 (9th  
15 Cir. 1997).

16 The moving party bears the initial burden of establishing the absence of a genuine issue  
17 of material fact. *See Celotex Corp. v. Catrett*, 477 U.S. 317, 323-24 (1986). On an issue for  
18 which the moving party does not have the burden of proof at trial, the moving party may satisfy  
19 this burden by “‘showing’—that is, pointing out to the district court—that there is an absence of  
20 evidence to support the nonmoving party’s case.” *Celotex*, 477 U.S. at 325. Once the moving  
21 party has met its initial burden, the nonmoving party must affirmatively present admissible  
22 evidence and identify specific facts sufficient to show a genuine issue for trial. *See id.* at 323-24;  
23 *Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc.*, 477 U.S. 242, 248 (1986). A scintilla of evidence or evidence  
24 that is not significantly probative does not present a genuine issue of material fact. *Addisu v.*  
25 *Fred Meyer*, 198 F.3d 1130, 1134 (9th Cir. 2000). “When the moving party has carried its  
26 burden under Rule 56(c), its opponent must do more than simply show that there is some  
27 metaphysical doubt as to the material facts.” *Matsushita Elec. Indus. Co. v. Zenith Radio Corp.*,  
28 475 U.S. 574, 586, 106 S. Ct. 1348, 1356, 89 L. Ed. 2d 538 (1986)

1 The Court need not reach issues not raised in a party's opening brief. *See Bowhay v.*  
2 *Colvin*, No. CV 12-2506 AN, 2013 WL 819794, at \*9 (C.D. Cal. Mar. 5, 2013) (citing *In re*  
3 *Rains*, 428 F.3d 893, 902 (9th Cir.2005)). The Court may, but need not, consider materials in the  
4 record to which the parties do not cite. Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(c)(3); *Carmen v. San Francisco*  
5 *Unified Sch. Dist.*, 237 F.3d 1026, 1031 (9th Cir. 2001) ("The district court need not examine the  
6 entire file for evidence establishing a genuine issue of fact, where the evidence is not set forth in  
7 the opposing papers with adequate references so that it could conveniently be found.").

8 "To survive summary judgment, a party does not necessarily have to produce evidence in  
9 a form that would be admissible at trial, as long as the party satisfies the requirements of Federal  
10 Rules of Civil Procedure 56." *Block v. City of Los Angeles*, 253 F.3d 410, 419 (9th Cir. 2001).  
11 "At the summary judgment stage, we do not focus on the admissibility of the evidence's form.  
12 We instead focus on the admissibility of its contents." *Fraser v. Goodale*, 342 F.3d 1032, 1036  
13 (9th Cir. 2003). Thus, even if evidence is presented upon a motion for summary judgment in a  
14 form that does not strictly meet the requirements of the Federal Rules of Evidence, the Court will  
15 still consider the evidence if it is apparent that the deficiency can be overcome at trial. *Id.* at  
16 1037; *see also Fonseca v. Sysco Food Servs. of Ariz., Inc.*, 374 F.3d 840, 846 (9th Cir. 2004.)  
17 "However, the Court may not consider inadmissible hearsay evidence which could not be  
18 presented in an admissible form at trial." *Stonefire Grill, Inc. v. FGF Brands, Inc.*, 987 F. Supp.  
19 2d 1023, 1037 (C.D. Cal. 2013).

## 20 **B. Application**

21 Lilly moves for summary judgment on all of Plaintiffs' claims, asserting *inter alia*, that  
22 Plaintiffs' cannot establish that Lilly's purportedly misleading or inadequate warning caused  
23 Plaintiffs' injuries. In relevant part, Lilly asserts that Plaintiffs cannot establish causation  
24 because: (1) Herrera's physicians had independent knowledge of the relevant risks, and (2)  
25 Plaintiffs' requested warning would not have changed Herrera's doctor's decision to prescribe  
26 Cymbalta.

### 27 **1. The Two Prior Cases Granting Summary Judgment to Lilly on** 28 **Claims that Lilly Failed to Adequately Warn of Cymbalta's Risks**

1 Two courts have already granted summary judgment to Lilly on similar claims to those at  
2 issue here: *McDowell v. Eli Lilly & Co.*, No. 13 CIV. 3786, 2014 WL 5801604 (S.D.N.Y. Nov.  
3 7, 2014) and *Carnes v. Eli Lilly & Co.*, No. CA 0:13-591-CMC, 2013 WL 6622915 (D.S.C. Dec.  
4 16, 2013).

5 In *McDowell*, the plaintiff had a history of depression and anxiety. *McDowell*, 2014 WL  
6 5801604, at \*4. Before taking Cymbalta he tried six other antidepressants, both alone and in  
7 combination, but to no avail. *Id.* Cymbalta was first prescribed to the plaintiff in 2008 by Nurse  
8 Practitioner Joan Caruana (“Caruana”). *Id.* at \*5. The plaintiff relied on the data in the 2005  
9 JAD Article and asserted several claims based on the supposed inadequacy of Cymbalta’s label’s  
10 warnings. *Id.* at \*1–4.

11 The court first found that the Cymbalta label discontinuation warning<sup>12</sup> was adequate as a  
12 matter of New York law. *Id.* at \*10. Under New York, law, a warning is adequate if it provides  
13 “specific detailed information on the risks of the drug.” *Id.* at \*11. More specifically, it is  
14 adequate when the prescribing information communicates “information regarding the precise  
15 malady incurred.” *Id.* (internal quotations and citation omitted.) The Court found that the label  
16 portrayed “with sufficient intensity the risk involved in taking the drug.” *Id.* at \*12. The Court  
17 noted that the label included a detailed list of possible discontinuation symptoms, including those  
18 that the plaintiff allegedly experienced. *Id.* The court also noted that the label included  
19 approximately twelve symptoms occurring “at a rate greater than or equal to 1%” in placebo-  
20 controlled clinical trials for Cymbalta. *Id.* The court found this method of communicating  
21 information on individual symptoms consistent with accepted practice and in accord with FDA  
22 regulations and guidance directing that the label “list the adverse reactions identified in clinical  
23 trials that occurred at or above a specified rate appropriate to the safety database. *Id.* (quoting 21  
24 C.F.R. § 20157(c)(7)). The court further found adequate the label’s statements that “[a]lthough  
25 these events [discontinuation symptoms] are generally self-limiting, some have been reported to

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26  
27 <sup>12</sup> The Court notes that the label in effect when the plaintiff was first prescribed Cymbalta had  
28 slight differences from that in effect when Herrera was first prescribed the drug. *See McDowell*,  
2014 WL 5801604, at \*1–3. The most relevant difference is that the “Warnings and Precautions”  
section stated that the listed side effects occurred following “abrupt or tapered discontinuation in  
placebo-controlled clinical trials.” *Id.* at \*2.

1 be severe.” *Id.* at \*13. *McDowell* noted that other courts had refused to require drug package  
2 inserts to include specific adverse event frequencies. *Id.* at \*14 (citing *Hurley v. Lederle Labs.,*  
3 *Div. of Am. Cyanamid Co.*, 651 F.Supp. 993, 1002 (E.D.Tex.1986)). The court also found  
4 probative Caruana’s testimony that she did not understand the label’s statement that certain  
5 discontinuation symptoms occurred at a rate greater than or equal to 1% to refer to the rate at  
6 which all of the symptoms (in the aggregate) were observed. *Id.*

7 The court then found that the plaintiff failed to establish a triable issue regarding whether  
8 the Cymbalta discontinuation warning proximately caused his harm. *Id.* at \*15–18. First,  
9 Caruana testified that she had independent knowledge of the risks of abruptly discontinuing  
10 Cymbalta. *Id.* at \*16. According to Caruana, she knew from her clinical experience that “at  
11 least half” of her patients experience some discontinuation symptom upon abrupt withdrawal and  
12 that she knew that “most” patients who stopped taking Cymbalta abruptly would experience  
13 discontinuation symptoms. *Id.* at \*7, \*15. Finally, the court again noted that Caruana testified  
14 that she did not understand the Cymbalta label to mean that all of the listed discontinuation  
15 symptoms combined (rather than each symptom individually) occurred in only 1% of patients.  
16 *Id.* at \*15.

17 In *Carnes v. Eli Lilly & Co.*, the court considered similar claims that Cymbalta’s label’s  
18 warnings regarding the risk of discontinuation symptoms upon discontinuing Cymbalta were  
19 inadequate. The plaintiff based his claims on the data disclosed in the 2005 JAD Article.  
20 *Carnes*, 2013 WL 6622915, at \*2. The plaintiff suffered from chronic pain following a spinal  
21 injury sustained in 2004 in a helicopter crash. *Id.* at \*1. His physician first prescribed Cymbalta  
22 in 2011. The plaintiff later asked a different physician to switch him from Cymbalta to a  
23 different medication. *Id.* That physician reduced the plaintiff’s dosage to 30 milligrams per day.  
24 *Id.* When the plaintiff returned roughly two months later, she told the plaintiff to cease taking  
25 Cymbalta. *Id.*

26 Like the label at issue in *McDowell*, the Cymbalta label then in effect listed roughly  
27 twelve discontinuation symptoms observed following “abrupt or tapered” discontinuation. *Id.* at  
28 \*1–2. It stated that “the following symptoms occurred at a rate greater than or equal to 1% and



1 at a significantly higher rate in duloxetine-treated patients compared to those discontinuing from  
2 placebo.” *Id.* at \*2. The plaintiff argued that he could establish proximate cause by showing that  
3 his doctor engaged in a joint decisionmaking process with patients regarding prescriptions, that  
4 if the doctor received a stronger warning the doctor would have relayed it to the plaintiff, and  
5 that if the plaintiff received the stronger warning then the plaintiff would have refused to take  
6 Cymbalta. *Id.* at \*5. The court rejected this argument as being without authority and as an  
7 attempt to displace the learned intermediary doctrine. *Id.* The court found that there was no  
8 triable issue of fact regarding proximate causation as to the first doctor to prescribe Cymbalta  
9 because the doctor testified that he would have still prescribed Cymbalta to the plaintiff even if  
10 he had received the purportedly required warning. *Id.* at \*5. The court also found that the initial  
11 prescribing doctor had independent knowledge of the risk and frequency of discontinuation  
12 symptoms upon abrupt withdrawal because the doctor estimated that more than half of his  
13 patients experienced discontinuation symptoms upon abruptly discontinuing Cymbalta. *Id.* The  
14 Court further found that the plaintiff couldn’t establish proximate cause as to the doctor who  
15 helped him discontinue Cymbalta because the plaintiff was already taking Cymbalta by the time  
16 that doctor started treating him. *Id.* at \*7. Additionally, the court noted that this second doctor  
17 did not testify that her decision to taper the plaintiff’s prescription would have been affected by a  
18 stronger warning. The court thus granted Lilly’s motion for summary judgment. *Id.* at \*7.

## 19 2. Plaintiffs’ Failure to Warn Claim

### 20 a. Legal Standard

21 Under California law, a prescription drug manufacturer owes to the medical profession a  
22 duty to provide adequate warnings if it “knows, or has reason to know, of any dangerous side  
23 effects of its drugs.” *Thomas v. Abbott Labs.*, No. CV-12-07005-MWF CWX, 2014 WL  
24 4197494, at \*5 (C.D. Cal. July 29, 2014) (citing *Carlin v. Superior Court*, 13 Cal.4th 1104,  
25 1111–13 (1996)). Under the learned intermediary doctrine, “in the case of prescription drugs,  
26 the duty to warn runs to *the physician*, not to the patient.” *Id.* (citing *Carlin*, 13 Cal. 4th at 1116)  
27 (emphasis in original). Thus, “if adequate warning of potential dangers of a drug has been given  
28 to doctors, there is no duty by the drug manufacturer to insure that the warning reaches the

1 doctor's patient for whom the drug is prescribed.” *Stevens v. Parke, Davis & Co.*, 9 Cal. 3d 51,  
2 65 (1973) (quoting *Love v. Wolf*, 226 Cal. App. 2d 378, 395 (Cal. Ct. App. 1964)); *see also*  
3 *Motus v. Pfizer Inc.*, 196 F. Supp. 2d 984, 990–91 (C.D. Cal. 2001) (*Motus I*) *aff’d sub nom.*  
4 *Motus v. Pfizer Inc. (Roerig Div.)*, 358 F.3d 659 (9th Cir. 2004) (*Motus II*).

5 A plaintiff asserting claims based on a failure to warn must prove: (1) that either no  
6 warning was provided or that the warning provided was inadequate; and (2) that “the inadequacy  
7 or absence of the warning caused the plaintiff’s injury.” *Id.* at 991 (citing *Plummer v. Lederle*  
8 *Laboratories*, 819 F.2d 349, 358 (2d Cir.1987) (applying California law)). However, no harm  
9 can be caused by the “failure to warn of a risk already known” to the physician. *Rosburg v.*  
10 *Minnesota Mining & Mfg. Co.*, 181 Cal. App. 3d 726, 735 (Cal. Ct. App. 1986). To prove  
11 causation, Plaintiffs must prove that Lilly’s alleged failure to warn was a “substantial factor” in  
12 bringing about their injuries. *See Motus I*, 196 F. Supp. 2d at 991 (citing *Rutherford v.*  
13 *Owens–Illinois, Inc.*, 16 Cal.4th 953, 968 (1997)). “The substantial factor standard is a relatively  
14 broad one, requiring only that the contribution of the individual cause be more than negligible or  
15 theoretical.” *Georges v. Novartis Pharm. Corp.*, 988 F. Supp. 2d 1152, 1157 (C.D. Cal. 2013)  
16 (quoting *Bockrath v. Aldrich Chem. Co.*, 21 Cal.4th 71, 79 (1999)).

17 **b. Application**

18 The thrust of Plaintiffs’ case is that Lilly failed to adequately warn of the likelihood and  
19 severity of discontinuation side effects upon discontinuing Cymbalta. This argument hinges  
20 largely on the proper interpretation of Cymbalta’s label’s statement that after “abrupt  
21 discontinuation in placebo-controlled clinical trials of up to 10-weeks duration, the following  
22 symptoms occurred at a rate greater than or equal to 2% and at a significantly higher rate in  
23 either the MDD [major depressive disorder] or GAD [generalized anxiety disorder] Cymbalta-  
24 treated patients compared to those discontinuing from placebo: dizziness; nausea; headache;  
25 paraesthesia; vomiting; irritability; and nightmare.”

26 Until the recently filed supplemental briefs, Plaintiffs based their claim that Cymbalta’s  
27 label is inadequate on the data disclosed in the 2005 JAD Article—which was entitled  
28 “Symptoms Following Abrupt Discontinuation of Duloxetine Treatment in Patients with Major

1 Depressive Disorder.” As discussed above, the 2005 JAD Article analyzes data collected from  
2 multiple clinical studies—each of which examined discontinuation symptoms following the  
3 abrupt discontinuation of Cymbalta. The Article finds that in short-term studies and upon abrupt  
4 discontinuation, 44.3% of Cymbalta-treated patients experienced at least one discontinuation  
5 symptom compared to 22.9% of patients taking the placebo. (Def.’s SUF ¶ 8.) It also separately  
6 identifies the frequency with which any individual symptom occurred. The discontinuation  
7 symptoms listed in the above-quoted section of the Cymbalta label each occurred at a rate  
8 between 2% and 12.4%. (Paley Decl., Ex. 10, at 276.)

9 Plaintiffs assert that the label is properly understood to refer to the side effects in the  
10 aggregate, suggests that 2% or only slightly greater than 2% of Cymbalta-treated patients  
11 experienced any of the listed discontinuation symptoms, and is therefore misleading because the  
12 data shows that 44.3% of Cymbalta-treated patients experienced one or more of the listed  
13 discontinuation symptoms.<sup>13</sup> Lilly asserts that the label is properly understood to refer to the  
14 frequency with which *each* of the listed discontinuation symptoms occurred, and that its  
15 statement that those discontinuation symptoms each occurred at a rate of 2% or greater  
16 accurately represents the data—which shows that each of the listed discontinuation symptoms  
17 occurred at a rate of no more than 12.4%.<sup>14</sup>

18 In the instant motion, Lilly argues that Plaintiffs can’t establish proximate cause because  
19 Herrera’s prescribing physician had independent knowledge. Lilly’s argument that the  
20 prescribing physician had independent knowledge of the relevant risks turns on a possible  
21 distinction between abrupt and tapered withdrawal: If there is a difference between the risk of  
22 discontinuation symptoms upon abrupt withdrawal and the risk of discontinuation symptoms

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23  
24 <sup>13</sup> The Article also finds that in the short term studies, 50.6% of discontinuation symptoms  
25 reported were moderate while 9.6% were severe. (Def.’s SUF ¶ 9.) The study also found that in a  
26 long-term open-label study, half of patients reported at least one discontinuation symptom, with  
27 17.2% of symptoms reported as severe and 46.3% reported as moderate. (Def.’s SUF ¶¶ 12–13.)

28 <sup>14</sup> Lilly cites *McDowell*’s holding that the label is adequate as a matter of law and asserts that it  
believes that the case could be decided on that issue. Nevertheless, Lilly expressly states that the  
Court need not reach the issue of the label’s adequacy because Plaintiffs fail to raise a triable issue  
as to proximate cause. Absent an invitation from Lilly or Plaintiffs, the Court will not reach the  
issue of Cymbalta’s label’s adequacy.

1 upon tapered withdrawal, then the physicians' independent knowledge of the need to taper could  
2 satisfy the relevant warning.

3 As discussed above, as of 2007 (when Braunstein prescribed Cymbalta to Herrera) he had  
4 already prescribed it for "many" other patients. Additionally, as of 2007, he knew that there  
5 were a "significant number of people that did have unpleasant withdrawal symptoms with  
6 Effexor and then with Cymbalta upon abrupt withdrawal." (Paley Decl., Ex. 2, at 73:19–22.) In  
7 light of this knowledge, he always warns people not to stop Cymbalta suddenly. He further  
8 testified that he knew that these symptoms were "common." (*Id.* at 163:10–11.) Additionally,  
9 Braunstein had seen some combination of "[d]ysphoric mood, irritability, agitation, dizziness,  
10 sensory disturbances (e.g., paresthesias, such as electric shock sensations), anxiety, confusion,  
11 headache, lethargy, emotional lability, insomnia, hypomania, tinnitus and seizures" with  
12 virtually every anti-depressant with which he's ever had experience. (*Id.* at 139:6–140:15.) He  
13 understood this independently of Cymbalta's prescribing information. (*Id.* at 140:16–20.)

14 While this evidence clearly shows that Braunstein had independent knowledge in 2007 of  
15 a significant likelihood of experiencing discontinuation symptoms upon abrupt withdrawal, it  
16 says nothing of Braunstein's knowledge regarding the risk of discontinuation symptoms upon  
17 tapered withdrawal. Moreover, Braunstein's testimony clearly indicates that he believed that  
18 tapering would substantially decrease the risk of experiencing discontinuation symptoms. For  
19 example, Braunstein testified that if a revised warning had been given he would have "maybe  
20 even more emphasized that do not stop this abruptly, that this is something that has to be weaned  
21 off of *or there's a high risk of withdrawal reaction[.]*" (Paley Decl., Ex. 2, at 164:15–25.)

22 Alongside their recent supplemental briefing, Plaintiffs submit evidence indicating that  
23 the risk of experiencing discontinuation symptoms upon withdrawing from Cymbalta may be the  
24 same regardless of whether the patient tapers off of the medication or discontinues abruptly.  
25 Moreover, Plaintiffs assert that Lilly either improperly withheld this information or buried it  
26 under an avalanche of documents produced in the last week of discovery. Thus, according to  
27 Plaintiffs, they were unable to ask Braunstein how this information would have affected his  
28 decision to prescribe Cymbalta to Herrera.

1           Moreover, in light of the newly uncovered evidence, the Court finds this case  
2 distinguishable from both *McDowell* and *Carnes*. Both of those courts relied, in relevant part, on  
3 the prescribing physicians’ knowledge of the risks of *abrupt* withdrawal. *See McDowell*, 2014  
4 WL 5801604, at \*15–17; *Carnes*, 2013 WL 6622915, at \*5–6. Additionally, neither court  
5 considered the possibility that there was no difference in the risk of discontinuation symptoms  
6 from discontinuing Cymbalta abruptly or tapering.

7           On this record, Plaintiffs’ evidence is sufficient to raise a triable issue of fact and Lilly  
8 fails to show that it is entitled to summary judgment under Rule 56. For the aforementioned  
9 reasons, the Court DENIES Lilly’s motion for summary judgment on Plaintiffs’ failure to warn  
10 claim.

11                           **3. Plaintiffs’ Other Claims Related to Lilly’s Alleged Failure to Warn**

12           In addition to their strict liability—failure to warn claim, Plaintiffs allege claims for:  
13 negligence, “strict product liability,” negligent misrepresentation, and fraud. (Dkt. 1.) To the  
14 extent that each of these claims is premised on the alleged inaccuracy, inadequacy, or misleading  
15 nature of Cymbalta’s label, each requires proof that the label’s alleged deficiencies caused  
16 Plaintiffs’ injuries. Thus, for the reasons discussed above, the Court DENIES Lilly’s motion for  
17 summary judgment on each of these claims. *Cf. Motus I*, 196 F. Supp. 2d at 987, 995–999  
18 (granting summary judgment on claims for wrongful death/negligence, strict liability, “survival  
19 action,” fraud and breach of warranty where all of these claims were “based to some extent” on  
20 the defendant’s alleged failure to warn and the plaintiff failed to establish causation).<sup>15</sup>

21                           **4. Plaintiffs’ Other Claims Related to an Alleged Design Defect**

22           In addition to Plaintiffs’ abandoned designed defect claim, their negligence claim asserts  
23 a design defect. Though the complaint fails to specify a design defect, in their Memorandum of  
24 Contentions of Law and Fact Plaintiffs assert that Lilly negligently failed to design a lower  
25 dosage Cymbalta pill to allow for “proper” tapering. (Dkt. 186: Mem. at 6.) Plaintiffs also  
26 indicated at the June 11, 2015 hearing that they intend to proceed with claims based on this 20  
27 milligram “cliff.”

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28           <sup>15</sup> The Court need not address Lilly’s arguments as to Plaintiffs’ abandoned claims.

1 The Court notes that pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 56(f), it has the  
2 authority to grant summary judgment on grounds not raised by a party. However, before the  
3 Court does so Plaintiff is entitled to sufficient notice and a reasonable opportunity to respond to  
4 any arguments. *See* Fed. R. Civ. Prod. 56(f); *Norse v. City of Santa Cruz*, 629 F.3d 966, 971 (9th  
5 Cir. 2010) (en banc).

6 Plaintiffs assert that Patel told Herrera to take 30 milligrams for 30 days and then to cease  
7 taking Cymbalta. (Wisener Decl., Ex. 5, at 242:4–12.) Herrera also asserts that she followed  
8 this plan. (*Id.* at 242:22–243:4.) Herrera does not allege that she took any 20 milligram  
9 Cymbalta pills. Thus, based on the evidence currently before the Court, the failure to design a  
10 lower dosage Cymbalta pill than the lowest dose then available—20 milligrams—could not have  
11 caused Plaintiffs’ harm.

12 In light of the foregoing, the Court hereby cautions Plaintiffs that the Court is dubious of  
13 their ability to show that the 20 milligram “cliff” caused their harm. Thus, absent a sufficient  
14 proffer of evidence from Plaintiffs, the Court would be inclined to grant summary judgment to  
15 Lilly on a claim based on this theory.

16 **V. SCHEDULE FOR FUTURE PROCEEDINGS**

17 At the hearing held on June 11, 2015, Plaintiffs explained how the newly uncovered Lilly  
18 documents will affect their theory of the case. Lilly argued that it would be prejudiced if  
19 Plaintiffs were allowed to proceed on a theory not laid out in their complaint. For the reasons  
20 discussed at the June 11 hearing, the Court GRANTS Plaintiffs leave to file an amended  
21 complaint. Plaintiffs SHALL file their amended complaint on or before June 29, 2015.

22 Additionally, the Court GRANTS Plaintiffs leave to augment their expert witnesses’s  
23 declarations to the extent that there is newly uncovered information. Plaintiffs SHALL file their  
24 supplemental expert reports on or before June 29, 2015. In light of the foregoing, the Court  
25 DECLINES TO REACH Lilly’s motions to exclude Morris and Glenmullen and GRANTS Lilly  
26 leave to file amended *Daubert* motions objecting to Plaintiff’s expert witnesses. Lilly SHALL  
27 file any such amended *Daubert* motion on or before July 7, 2015. Plaintiffs SHALL file any  
28 response to such amended *Daubert* motions on or before July 14, 2015.

1           Moreover, in light of the foregoing, the Court sets this case for trial on August 4, 2015.  
2 A pretrial conference shall be held on August 3, 2015 at 3:00 P.M.

3 **VI. ORDER**

4           1. For the aforementioned reasons, the Court DENIES Lilly's motion for summary  
5 judgment on all of Plaintiffs' claims.

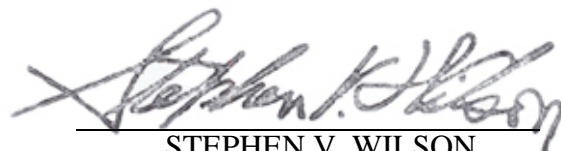
6           2. In light of the foregoing, the Court GRANTS Plaintiffs LEAVE to file an amended  
7 complaint and to supplement their expert declarations to the extent that there is newly discovered  
8 evidence. Plaintiffs SHALL file their amended complaint and amended expert declarations on or  
9 before June 29, 2015.

10           3. In light of the foregoing, the Court GRANTS Lilly leave to file amended *Daubert*  
11 motions objecting to Plaintiff's expert witnesses. Lilly shall file any such amended motion on or  
12 before July 7, 2015. The Court GRANTS Plaintiffs leave to file a response to Lilly's amended  
13 *Daubert* motions. Plaintiffs SHALL file any such response on or before July 14, 2015.

14           4. In light of the foregoing, the Court SETS this case for trial on August 4, 2015. The  
15 Parties are ORDERED to appear for a pretrial conference on August, 3, 2015 at 3:00 P.M.<sup>16</sup>

16  
17 **IT IS SO ORDERED.**

18  
19 Dated: June 19, 2015

20   
21 **STEPHEN V. WILSON**  
22 United States District Judge

23  
24  
25  
26  
27 <sup>16</sup> In light of the foregoing, the Court finds it unnecessary to reach Lilly's argument that it is  
28 entitled to summary judgment on Plaintiffs' request for punitive damages. Additionally, given  
that the Court directed Lilly to complete production of a more detailed privilege log and certain  
disputed documents and gave Plaintiffs an opportunity to augment the record, the Court need not  
reach Plaintiffs' request under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 56(d).