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How to Make People Believe Any Anti-Vitamin Scare - It Just Takes Lots of Pharmaceutical Industry Cash

by Andrew W. Saul

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(OMNS, Oct 20, 2011) Recent much trumpeted anti-vitamin news is the product of pharmaceutical company payouts. No, this is not one of "those" conspiracy theories. Here's how it's done:

1) Cash to study authors. Many of the authors of a recent negative vitamin E paper (1) have received substantial income from the pharmaceutical industry. The names are available in the last page of the paper (1556) in the "Conflict of Interest" section. You will not see them in the brief summary at the JAMA website. A number of the study authors have received money from pharmaceutical companies, including Merck, Pfizer, Sanofi-Aventis, AstraZeneca, Abbott, GlaxoSmithKline, Janssen, Amgen, Firmagon, and Novartis.

2) Advertising revenue. Many popular magazines and almost all major medical journals receive income from the pharmaceutical industry. The only question is, how much? Pick up a copy of the publication and count the pharmaceutical ads. The more space sold, the more revenue for the publication. If you try to find their advertisement revenue, you'll see that they don't disclose it. So, just count the Pharma ads. Look in them all: Readers Digest <http://orthomolecular.org/resources/omns/v06n11.shtml> , JAMA, Newsweek, Time, AARP Today, NEJM, Archives of Pediatrics. Even Prevention magazine. Practically any major periodical.

3) Rigged trials. Yes, it is true and yes it is provable. In a recent editorial, we explained how trials of new drugs are often rigged at <http://orthomolecular.org/resources/omns/v04n20.shtml> . Studies of the health benefits of vitamins and essential nutrients also appear to be rigged. This can be easily done by using low doses to guarantee a negative result, and by biasing the interpretation to show a statistical increase in risk.

4) Bias in what is published, or rejected for publication. The largest and most popular medical journals receive very large income from pharmaceutical advertising. Peer-reviewed research indicates that this influences what they print, and even what study authors conclude from their data. <http://orthomolecular.org/resources/omns/v05n02.shtml> .

5) Censorship of what is indexed and available to doctors and the public. Public tax money pays for censorship in the largest public medical library on the planet: the US National Library of Medicine (MEDLINE/PubMed). <http://orthomolecular.org/resources/omns/v06n03.shtml>. See also: <http://orthomolecular.org/resources/omns/v06n05.shtml>.

Don't Believe It?

How well were these pro-vitamin, anti-drug studies covered in the mass media?

- A Harvard study showed a 27% reduction in AIDS deaths among patients given vitamin supplements. (2)
- There have been no deaths from vitamins in 27 years. <http://orthomolecular.org/resources/omns/v07n05.shtml>
- Antibiotics cause 700,000 emergency room visits per year, just in the US. (3)
- Modern drug-and-cut medicine is at least the third leading cause of death in the USA. Some estimates place medicine as the number one cause of death. (4)
- Over 1.5 million Americans are injured every year by drug errors in hospitals, doctors' offices, and nursing homes. If in a hospital, a patient can expect at least one medication error every single day. (5)
- More than 100,000 patients die every year, just in the US, from drugs properly prescribed and taken as directed. (6)

Double Standard

Countless comedians have made fun of the incompetent physician who, when called late at night during a life-threatening disease crisis, says, "take two aspirin and call me in the morning." It's no longer funny. One of the largest pharmaceutical conglomerates in the world ran prime-time national television commercials that declared: "Bayer aspirin may actually help stop you from dying if you take it during a heart attack." The company also promotes such use of its product on the Internet. <http://www.wonderdrug.com/>, formerly http://www.bayeraspirin.com/news/heart_attack.htm

Daily Aspirin Use Linked With Pancreatic Cancer

Here's something you may have not seen. Research has shown that women who take just one aspirin a day, "which millions do to prevent heart attack and stroke as well as to treat headaches - may raise their risk of getting deadly pancreatic cancer. . . . Pancreatic cancer affects only 31,000 Americans a year, but it kills virtually all its victims within three years. The study of 88,000 nurses found that those who took two or more aspirins a week for 20 years or more had a 58 percent higher risk of pancreatic cancer." (7) **Women who took two or more aspirin tablets per day had an alarming 86 percent greater risk of pancreatic cancer.**

Study author Dr. Eva Schernhammer of Harvard Medical School was quoted as saying: "Apart from smoking, this is one of the few risk factors that have been identified for pancreatic cancer. Initially we expected that aspirin would protect against pancreatic cancer."

How about that.

Say: What if there was one, just **one** case of pancreatic cancer caused by a vitamin? What do you think the press would have said about that?

The fact is, vitamins are known to be effective and safe. They are essential nutrients, and when taken at the proper doses over a lifetime, are capable of preventing a wide variety of diseases. Because drug companies can't make big profits developing essential nutrients, they have a vested interest in agitating for the use of drugs and disparaging the use of nutritional supplements.

(Orthomolecular Medicine News Service editor Andrew W. Saul taught nutrition, health science and cell biology at the college level, and has published over 100 reviews and editorials in peer-reviewed publications. He is author or coauthor of ten books and is featured in the documentary film Food Matters. His website is <http://www.doctoryourself.com>.)

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