

CANCER *Defeated!*

Drug Companies: Worse than Your Worst Fears

In the last few months I've done extensive research on the major drug companies — "Big Pharma" as some people like to call them, in the same vein as "Big Oil" or "Big Banks."

What I've learned has shattered any idea I had that these organizations want to do the right thing at least some of the time. You might think they're "well meaning but misguided." Wrong. They're bad to the bone.

They're cheating us and killing us, they know it perfectly well, and they're doing it all the same because tens of billions of profits are at stake.

It's a big idea to wrap your head around — the idea that our entire medical system is thoroughly corrupt. I've known for a long time that the medical establishment was wrong about some major issues such as cancer treatment and most heart treatments. They're on the wrong track when it comes to these diseases of aging.

And I knew that "drug money" had corrupted the process of developing and approving treatments. Look at a professional medical journal and you'll see most of the ads are from big drug companies. Those ad revenues keep the journals in business. And many of their "scientific" articles are just reports on drug-company-funded research. These facts are old news to people interested in alternative health.

But it's one thing to say, "There's a lot of corruption," and another thing to say, "The whole thing is corrupt beyond hope of repair."

I now take the second view. These companies and their products are a deadly threat to your health (and your wealth, too, since their approach to healthcare is bankrupting the country). To be on the safe side, you need to assume that every word they say is a lie including "a" and "the," and you have to research and fiercely question every single thing a conventional doctor tells you to do. If you're not willing to do that, then you're putting your life and health at risk and you'll get what you get.

If you're wondering where your trusted local physician fits into all this, I have more to say about that in a minute. First I want to give you just a few of the facts that convinced me the system is corrupt beyond repair.

That "little purple pill" . . .

Maybe you remember how a major drug company saturated TV with ads touting the "little purple pill." The new drug treated a disease most of us had never heard of — "acid reflux disease." People used to call it heartburn but now it has a fancy name and even its own acronym, GERD, for gastro-esophageal reflux disease. "Gastro" refers to the stomach and "esophageal" refers to the esophagus — the tube from your throat down to your stomach.

GERD is caused by stomach acid backing up your esophagus, sometimes all the way to your mouth where you can taste it. The stuff in your stomach literally goes in the wrong direction -- back up to your mouth.

Among other things, the ads claimed GERD can lead to cancer of the esophagus. In any case GERD leads to pain and discomfort, and the drug company offered this great new breakthrough — the little purple pill -- to deal with the problem.

Well, now. It turns out there was already a "purple pill" on the market, and it was one of the best-selling drugs in the world. But the older drug was about to lose its patent and the drug-maker was desperate. Soon anyone would be able to make a generic version.

So the drug-maker created a new drug that's a mirror image of the old one. If you hold a molecule of the new drug up to the mirror it's identical to a molecule of the old drug.

The government accepted this as a "new drug" and granted a patent. Leaving nothing to chance, the drug-maker put a higher dose of the new drug into each pill, then tested it against the old drug. The human trials showed the new drug was more effective. Of course: the dose was higher.

Then came the saturation advertising campaign so that virtually everyone in the country now knows what the little purple pill is. And thousands of people with bad digestion showed up at their doctor's office and asked for it. Instead of telling patients the old drug is just as good, doctors prescribed the new drug.

The little purple pill was a huge success. It's a marketing legend in the drug business. Unfortunately, it's nine or ten times as costly as the old drug that's exactly the same thing. No wonder the country is going broke.

It happens all the time

This story isn't unusual. It's standard operating procedure in the drug business. Clarinex, a prescription allergy drug, is just a metabolite of Claritin, a drug that went off patent years ago. Twenty minutes after you take Claritin, your digestive system has turned it into Clarinex.

It was a rerun of the purple pill scam. When Claritin was going off-patent, the company came out with Clarinex. The over-the-counter version sells for around 60 cents a pill while the newer prescription drug sells for more than \$4 a pill.

Marcia Angell, MD, is a former editor in chief of the *New England Journal of Medicine* and lectures at Harvard Medical School. She "went straight" and is now the nation's leading whistleblower on the kind of drug company shenanigans I just described.

According to Dr. Angell, most "new" drugs are just "me-too" drugs at high prices. Out of 487 "new" drugs approved during a recent five-year period, more than two-thirds were old drugs with a new name and a high price. Only 32% contained a new active ingredient. And fewer than half of those new ingredients were any better than older ingredients, according to the FDA itself.

Coming in the next issue: There's a lot more to this story. You'll see why ALL new drugs are inherently unsafe. And many drugs — new and old alike -- are no better than a placebo when it comes to treating whatever it is they're supposed to treat.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lee Euler".

Lee Euler
Publisher

The Drug Company Threat to Your Health, Part II

We're witnessing a collapse of the conventional medical system into incompetence, corruption and bankruptcy. Other than shock-trauma (treatment for accidents) and obvious bacterial infections like TB and pneumonia, conventional doctors do almost nothing right and you should avoid them if you possibly can.

I don't say this lightly. I used to be a true believer in doctors. The more I learn about them, the worse they look. Now I spend a fair amount of my time and money trying to repair the damage they did (way too many antibiotics, for example). And I count myself lucky — my health is pretty good, compared to my friends and relatives who still believe in conventional medicine.

The most reliable available figures show that prescription drugs are the fourth leading cause of death in the United States, after heart disease, cancer and stroke.

That's why the drug companies provide the easiest way to peer into the center of our failing health system. Last week I wrote about how most of their "new" drugs are really old drugs at five or ten times the price.

Maybe that wouldn't be so bad if the drugs — new or old — actually worked. But they don't.

The Great Placebo Crisis

Many prescription and OTC drugs perform no better than a placebo — a sugar pill. As you may know, the FDA doesn't approve a new drug until it's been proven better than a sugar pill in a minimum of three human trials. All the drug company has to prove is that the drug is better than nothing.

The corruption starts right there. A drug company can run as many trials as it wants until it gets three successful ones. Eight trials, ten trials. Doesn't matter.

So the new wonder drug may have lost to a placebo five times — who knows? — while beating a placebo only three times.

That's no different from flipping a coin eight times, getting three heads, and then announcing that you have a "new, improved" coin that comes up heads more often than tails. In other words, it's utter nonsense. It's not science.

In spite of the FDA's lax standard for beating a placebo, most new drugs STILL can't do so. The placebo problem has actually become a crisis in the drug industry. The placebo effect is very powerful and, typically, 20 percent or more of patients improve if they merely think they're receiving a treatment, even when they're not.

This should prompt the medical community to look at our minds and spirits as ways of helping us heal. But of course, there wouldn't be much money in that.

Again and again, new drugs are unable to beat placebos and win FDA approval. And many of the drugs that win approval didn't really beat a placebo at all, as I just explained. And please notice that a new drug doesn't have to be proven better than older, cheaper drugs. The new drug you're taking may be no better than a drug that's been around for years. Nobody knows. They don't test for that.

If you have to take a drug for, say, diabetes or heart disease, you're almost always better off taking an older drug than the new "wonder drug" that's

advertised all over the place. For example, the most expensive cholesterol drugs are no better than the older ones that are now off-patent and available as generics. But the new ones cost several times as much.

Your doctor knows all this, or should.

They have effects, just not the ones you want

Although they're often ineffective for the condition they're supposed to treat, drugs DO still have effects — side effects. Usually bad side effects.

Antidepressants are among the worst offenders when it comes to being no better than a placebo, while being loaded with side effects. The natural alternatives are at least as good for depression — often better — and they're definitely cheaper and safer.

The most popular antidepressants are selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors or SSRI's. This category includes the brand name drugs Prozac™, Zoloft™, Paxil™, and several others. Annual sales of the group exceed \$14 billion per year.

A major study by the FDA itself showed that 80% of the improvement that patients experience with SSRI's is due to the placebo effect.

Dr. Arif Khan, a psychiatrist in Bellevue, Washington, reviewed the data from dozens of human trials conducted on 9 antidepressants including the leading SSRI's. In more than half these studies, the placebo relieved the patients' depression just as well, or better than, the drugs.

But I don't want you to think the drugs have no effects. SSRI's and other antidepressants have dozens of side effects, including many that are dangerous.

The same is true of drugs in other categories. A major study in Canada found that finasteride, a leading drug for male prostate problems, was little better than a placebo. Does that mean the drug does nothing? You wish. The patients on the drug developed sexual impotence at twice the rate of those on placebo. Finasteride is marketed under the brand name Proscar.

This isn't to say all drugs are no better than a placebo. Some do what they're supposed to — reduce blood pressure, get rid of acne or whatever. But too often, the side effects are worse than the disease — and too often, patients don't discover the side effects until it's too late.

The acne drug I have in mind causes cancer in lab animals and induces mental illness in some youngsters. But it's very effective at clearing up acne, and hundreds of thousands of kids take it, at horrible risk to their health — maybe cancer, fifteen or twenty years from now.

This whole issue of safety could fill a book. I just want to touch on a few safety issues right now. You may think the FDA at least makes sure drugs are tested for safety before being approved. Not so. The required human trials are just enough to prove patients won't keel over quickly, within a few months.

Drug companies aren't required to demonstrate long-term safety. The human phase of testing only totals about three years and generally no single patient is tested for more than year or so. That's not long enough for long term side effects like cancer and heart disease to show up.

That's why you're always hearing that some drug or other is being pulled off the market because it's associated with heart disease. The "experts" don't know the heart risk until the drug has been on the market for years and millions of people have taken it. THEN the long-term effects show up. As for cancer, rarely is any drug pulled off the market for that, because it's so hard to prove cause and effect for this disease that can take decades to develop in humans.

You've probably heard of the famous Vioxx case — the painkiller that was pulled off the market because it was found to be associated with heart problems. Less well-known is Rezulin, a "new generation" diabetes drug that was recalled because it causes liver damage. Some people died and others required liver transplants. Rezulin is one of a whole family of diabetes drugs. Its relatives are still on the market and millions of people are still taking them.

The New England Journal of Medicine reported that another member of this family of diabetes drugs, Avandia, increases the risk of heart attack as shown by 42 human trials. A later study cast doubt on those results, and the drug-maker is fighting it all the way.

So here's where things stand: significant evidence suggests Avandia damages the heart, a related drug is known to damage the liver and has already been withdrawn — and yet doctors go on prescribing Avandia. I think the drug will eventually be pulled off the market.

Frightening risk of cancer

Drug Company Hazards to Your Health

Here's one of the scariest studies I've seen: A review of 242 prescription drugs found that 42% of them cause cancer in lab animals, according to information provided in the drug packaging!

This is an old study from the late 1990s. It should have set off alarms all over the place and led to more studies. But as usual in cases like this, the medical profession didn't follow up to learn more. They don't want to know. And, anyway, most medical research is funded by the drug companies and they DEFINITELY don't want to know.

The same is true of the most famous study proving deaths and injuries from the use of prescription drugs. You've probably read about it in other alternative health publications. I'm talking about a 1998 University of Toronto study showing that 106,000 Americans per year die from the effects of medications. Two million more are hurt seriously enough to go to a hospital. And the study didn't compile figures for people who were sickened by their medications, but not badly enough to head for an ER.

That study is the main proof that medications are the #4 cause of death. But there was no follow-up. Nothing was done. That's shocking in itself. The medical profession shows no interest in finding out more about the #4 cause of death.

In fact, medications are almost NEVER listed as the cause of death on a death certificate. The profession is either not interested or wants to protect doctors from lawsuits. Their whole attitude, "It's not us. Don't look at us."

Guess what: It's them. Think twice before you accept their advice.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lee Euler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lee Euler
Publisher

Please tell us what you think.

Send your comments and feedback to: newsletter@cancerdefeated.com