

The Frightening Road Ahead for Prescription Drugs and the Implications for 'Real' Alternative Health

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By Nicholas Regush

Here are some of the people who need a refresher course in the history of prescription drugs:

- Federal politicians who have been pushing the Food And Drug Administration to speed up their review of drugs.
- FDA bureaucrats who speed up review of "me-too" drugs to placate the drug industry. (The "me-too" drugs are essentially those that are very similar to existing drugs.)
- Drug company marketeers who hype the value of new drugs.
- Doctors who get caught up in sales pitches and do not take the time to do basic research that would indicate the marginal value (if any added benefits) of most new drugs.
- Business leaders and doctors on the "alternative" medical front that are helping to grind the FDA into the ground by arguing that the agency is stopping BREAKTHROUGH drugs from being used in the U.S.
- Patients who are rallied by the drug industry to pressure the FDA to approve questionable drugs.

Anyone who believes that the FDA is stopping tons of terrific new life-saving drugs from getting on the market has no idea what he or she is talking about and badly needs a history lesson, not to mention a few tips on how to conduct some basic inquiries.

This notion that there are all these extraordinary drugs in the medical pipeline is pure propaganda - whether it's coming from drug company low lifes or the other low lifes - the shameless hucksters of what I like to call the "quasi-alternative" health movement.

There has been so much evidence gathered for years to prove this point - that the vast majority of drugs approved by the FDA have little or nothing to do with saving lives or even improving lives beyond what is already available on the shelves - that it is amazing that the propagandists still have some influence in the U.S. Congress.

On the "conventional" front, the FDA gets new drug applications for so-called life-saving drugs once in a Blue Moon. The rest of the NDAs are for me-too's or drugs of questionable and marginal value.

On what I like to call the "real alternative" front, the real progress that is being made in health care comes from those health professionals who are attempting to provide a level of care that takes the entire being into account - and often this does not require drug therapy of any kind.

Proper nutrition, for one thing, will go a long way in helping someone become healthier.

If conventional drugs are deemed necessary, there are more than enough on the shelves that have been around long enough to determine the side-effects patterns, to help a patient.

What all the people referred to above have succumbed to is a mantra that keeps repeating how valuable chemicals are in making people well. Yes, there are certainly important drugs out there,

but probably not more than 100 of them are really needed. The rest are candy for someone's bank account.

Not only is drug prescription out-of-control, but with an FDA that has been reduced to an arm of the drug industry, there will be many more drugs out there before long - and many of them will be needlessly harming people who have simply become market-targets for the most prosperous business in the world.

The new vision of health that is slowly emerging looks at the entire body as a dynamic entity, one that requires a wide range of sustenance, including good nutrition, clean air, unpolluted water and a far more equitable society that doesn't ravage the mind with endless pressures about success and consumption.

Unfortunately, before this real alternative model of medicine takes hold, huge numbers of people will die needlessly because of toxic insults produced by drugs. And many of those who die will not have had the opportunity to test out other modes of less toxic treatment.

My take on conventional medicine has always been that it has become so drug-driven that any therapy now becomes a crapshoot.

My take on alternative medicine is that there are essentially two forms of it:

- one is close to the conventional-toxic model (the "quasi-alternative") and insists on all these extraordinary new drug and drug-like remedies out there that will prevent illness and cure disease;
- the other (the "real alternative") is a more intelligent approach to the body in its efforts to understand how an individual UNIQUELY responds to all the inputs in his or her environment.

In some ways, the drug charlatans on the conventional side have a lot in common with their remedy-pushing brothers and sisters on the quasi alternative side. What is unfortunate is that some of what is referred to as "alternative medicine" is not alternative at all; it is merely more of the same bad research, market-targeting and money grubbing.

Also, unfortunately, the money grubbers on the quasi alternative side are helping to do great damage to the FDA by questioning the need for its existence. Well, folks, take the FDA away and you'll see a drug free-for-all the likes of which has never been seen on this planet.

I'm well aware of the fact that the FDA prosecutes many doctors who are probably in the alternative camp who I find admirable. These are doctors who try to help the patient heal the entire body, rather than foolishly carving it up into bits and pieces like chopped meat.

However, these prosecutions will only escalate now that the FDA is about to expand its program - namely to get drugs passed more quickly through its review pipeline.

With almost no public debate, the agency agreed with the drug industry to let them foot even more of the review bill. Not only does this make the FDA far more dependent on the drug industry, and not only will the FDA likely approve many more drugs that will harm or kill people, but the agency will also likely go on a rampage against many health practitioners that are trying to escape the conventional mode of medicine by offering new therapies, including many involving nutrition.

Rather than work closely with those types of doctors to determine if there is a place where some compromise can be reached, the FDA will now more than likely play Big Brother more than ever.

The FDA, I suspect, will also take a real bead on nutritional supplements - far more than ever - because of pressures from the drug industry to allow only prescription sales for many of those products, and sales that will likely end up going to the conventional drug industry. Well, what did you expect?

The doctors in the real alternative movement who apply holistic principles will have their drug and remedy peddling "friends" in the quasi- alternative movement to thank, in part, for that new direction, as a direct result of all the lobbying that has been done to get drugs through the FDA much more quickly. And that has turned out to require drug industry support. Reciprocity will be the name of the game here! What great irony!

Few, I'm sure, in this drug peddling bunch have much of a notion about what Thalidomide, the Dalkon Shield and Breast Implants did to people. Few will even remember that in recent years the FDA had to yank 9 damaging drugs from the market.

This culture is fast becoming a war zone between those on the "drug" side and those on the "holistic" side.

Where do you stand? Have you got it straight yet?

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