

Kids First

Drugs are not Health Care!

Consider this—if you were to give a therapeutic, properly prescribed drug to a healthy person it would surely make that person sick. Why do we then believe that giving that same drug to a sick person, who is already weakened, would make that person healthy?

This is a marketing reality which we, as Canadians, have bought into as “health care.” We have been taught to believe that it is normal and healthy to spray a can of toxic waste down your throat for relief of asthma. And that the taking of natural health products, vitamins or a visit to a chiropractor or naturopath can be dangerous. Nothing could be further from the truth!

It's estimated that in the mid 1990s, 2,216,000 hospitalized patients in the USA had serious adverse drug reactions, or drug reactions resulting in death, permanent disabling or requiring hospitalization. Approximately 200,000 of these had fatal adverse drug reactions, making these reactions between the fourth and sixth leading cause of preventable death. I exclude errors in drug administration, non-compliance, overdose, drug abuse, therapeutic failures and possible adverse drug reactions, even though the incidence of serious and fatal adverse drug reactions in hospitals was found to be extremely high!

To make this clear for you—it's similar in fatalities and permanent injuries to having three jumbo jet crashes every two days! Yet according to author Bruce H. Pomeranz, a Toronto researcher, only 156 death certificates ever showed deaths due to drug

reactions. Even when the cause of death is known to be a drug, it is rarely recorded as such. The death certificate might list stomach haemorrhage as the cause of death—without mentioning the use of the drug that brought it on.

Therapeutic drug use kills approximately 200,000 people each year, puts 8.8 million people in hospitals, accounts for 28 per cent of all hospital admissions and costs as much as \$182 billion dollars.

The Lancet, a prestigious research journal, states that medication-error deaths are rising and reports that one out of every 131 outpatient deaths were caused by medication error. The report further states that “patients must understand and be warned about the potential dangers of prescription drugs.”

I mention these disturbing statistics because most Canadians are still quite comfortable taking drugs for all variety of ailments without so much as a passing thought, much to the delight of the pharmaceutical cartel.

If you think that what you are reading is too far-fetched, read on. A few years ago, physicians in Los Angeles went on strike to protest soaring malpractice premiums. The death rate dropped 18 per cent. Coincidental?

In Bogota, Columbia, physicians went on a 52-day strike. The death rate dropped 35 per cent. When the strike ended, the death rate rose again to pre-strike levels.

The most alarming evidence was seen recently in Israel. Doctors decided to

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strike and, according to the Jerusalem Burial Society, the death rate dropped 50 per cent. Amazing! Unfortunately, this put a severe strain on the economy and funeral parlours began to lobby the government to give in to the doctors' demands!

I'm a pediatric chiropractor and to me the use of drugs is not health care. I'm not saying that they are not needed in an emergency. My concern is that we, as parents, are programming our kids to believe that medication is what will make us better. They're being taught that they need only to reach for a drug and it will make them better. Children are being taught that they have a “chemical imbalance” in the brain and need Ritalin to balance their brain chemistry, that their heartburn is the direct result of a shortage of Gaviscon, that headaches are directly attributable to a deficiency of Tylenol and that depression is the result of not enough Prozac in the bloodstream. This learned thinking is the result of massive marketing efforts by the pharmaceutical industry.

My hope is that these words have made you reevaluate the manner in which you approach the health of your family. If I have caused you to think, then I have succeeded. ■

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