

The ABCs of disease mongering: An epidemic in 26 letters*

Alan Cassels

Health Policy Researcher

Victoria, BC, Canada

*Créer de nouvelles maladies pour créer
une demande et faire prescrire de
nouveaux médicaments



*2ème Journée Internationale
de l'Indépendance Médicale (Ji iM)*

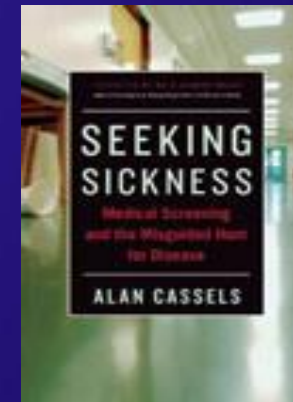
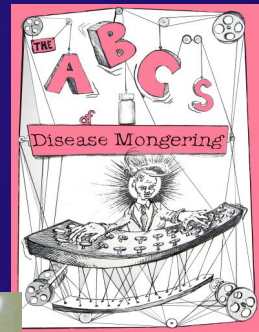
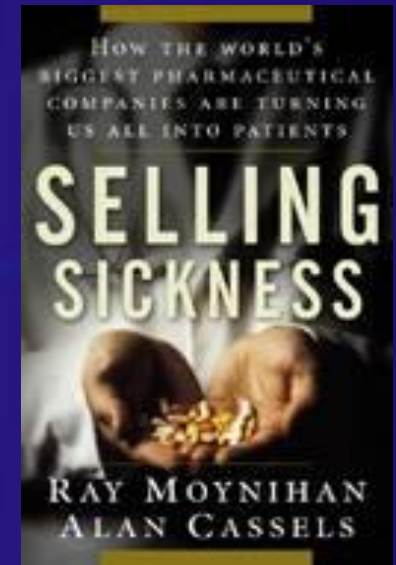
I am not...

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In the next hour, we'll discuss....

- Selling Sickness and Disease Mongering
- Examples from the 'new' DSM V
- A bit about medical screening
- The role of Sales Representatives



*“I want us to be like
Wrigley’s and sell to
everyone.”*

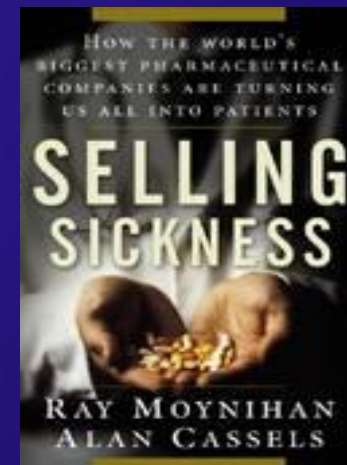


Merck CEO Henry Gadsden as
reported in W. Robertson, Fortune,
March 1976

*“The unhealthy influence of the pharmaceutical industry
has become a global scandal.*

*That influence is fundamentally distorting medical
science, corrupting the way medicine is practiced and
corroding the public’s trust in their doctors.”*

-- Alan Cassels and Ray Moynihan, *Selling Sickness*



Disease mongering

“widening the boundaries of treatable illness in order to expand markets for those who deliver treatments”

- *Moynihan et al. BMJ 2002; 324: 886-891*



How is Sickness “Sold”?

- Drug companies:
 - **Produce (and publish) studies proving a drug's efficacy.**
 - **Publicize dramatic statistics** from the most favorable studies; generate media interest;
 - **Hire Key Opinion Leaders**--prominent doctors/specialists to promote the DISEASE as well as the product;
 - Sponsor "disease awareness" campaigns
 - **Recruit patient groups** to serve as the "public face" for the condition; Astroturf groups.

Typical language indicating Disease Mongering...

- THE CONDITION:
 - “Millions of sufferers”; “Enormous burden of disease”; “One in four lifetime chance of getting...”; “High risk”; “undiagnosed and untreated...”
- THE POTENTIAL TREATMENT:
 - “Breakthrough”, “Miracle cure”, “Magic Bullet”, “Super drug”, “Tremendous therapeutic advance”, “Overwhelming evidence” ...

Low Testosterone

Is It Low T?

HOME | WHAT IS LOW T | DO YOU HAVE LOW T | WHAT YOU CAN DO | PARTNER

- Low Sex Drive
- Lack of Energy
- Body Changes
- Mood Changes
- Sexual Dysfunction

Not Feeling Like the Man You Used to Be?

You May Have Low Testosterone (Low T)

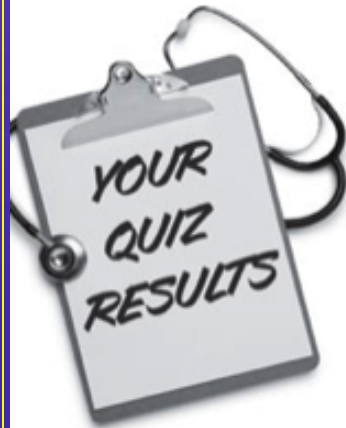
Low testosterone is a common medical condition that often goes undiagnosed because its symptoms are similar to other conditions.¹ Low T affects an estimated 1.7 million men in Canada.^{1,2}

TAKE THE QUIZ

Take the Low T Quiz | **Talk to Your Doctor**

Terms of Use | Site Map | Privacy Policy | References | Français

Self questionnaire



Consider Getting Tested For Low Testosterone (Low T).

If you answered **“yes”** to questions 1 or 7 or at least three of the other questions, your symptoms may be caused by Low T. ⁴ Bring this completed quiz and to your doctor to discuss your results.

Reference:

4. Morley JE, Charlton E, Patrick P et al. Validation of a screening questionnaire for androgen deficiency in aging males. *Metabolism* 2000;49(9):1239-1242.

1. Do you have a decrease in libido (sex drive)?
2. Do you have a lack of energy?
3. Do you have a decrease in strength and/or endurance?
4. Have you lost height?
5. Have you noticed a decreased "enjoyment of life"?
6. Are you sad and/or grumpy?
7. Are your erections less strong?
8. Have you noticed a recent deterioration in your ability to play sports?
9. Are you falling asleep after dinner?
10. Has there been a recent deterioration in your work performance?


“Market-created” or “market-fuelled” diseases

- Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD)
- Hypoactive Sexual Desire Disorder (HSDD)
- Menopause
- “High” cholesterol
- “Pre-dementia”
- “Pre-diabetes”; “prehypertension”;
- Cyberchondria

THINK IT'S PMS?
THINK AGAIN.

New disease, old
drug, with new
packaging...

Now known as
"Prozac in Pink"



~~mood~~ swing

Think it's PMS? Think again.


It could be PMDD.
Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder—the intense mood and physical symptoms right before your period. If extreme monthly irritability, mood swings and bloating are messing with your life, now there's help. Introducing Sarafem—the first and only FDA-approved prescription medication for PMDD. To learn more about PMDD, visit Sarafem.com or call 1-800-585-7898.

new
Sarafem[™]
fluoxetine hydrochloride

More like the Woman you are

Why live this way another month? Talk to your doctor today.

Important Safety Information—If you develop a rash or hives while taking Sarafem, call your doctor right away because this can be a sign of a serious medical condition. You should not take Sarafem at the same time as or within two weeks of stopping an MAO inhibitor (MAOI). Don't take an MAOI for *at least* 5 weeks after stopping Sarafem. Also, you should not take thioridazine at the same time as or within 5 weeks of stopping Sarafem. Some women may experience side effects such as tiredness, upset stomach, nervousness, dizziness and difficulty concentrating. Side effects are usually mild and tend to go away within a few weeks. Sarafem contains fluoxetine hydrochloride, the same active ingredient found in Prozac®. Be sure to tell your doctor if you are pregnant or nursing, or planning on becoming pregnant. Please see the following page for additional product information.



Lilly

A cure for HSDD*?

Intrinsa**....



* This condition used to be called, “Not tonight Honey, I have a headache.”

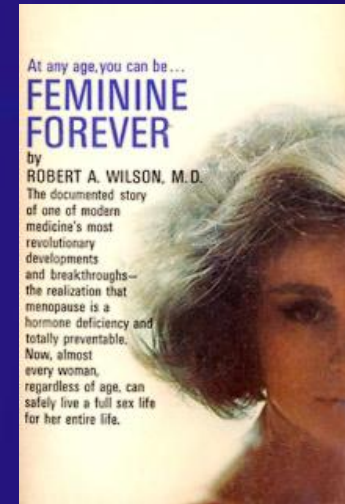
**A testosterone patch.

“I don't want to expose several million American women to heart disease and stroke in order to have one more sexual experience a month.”

Dr Steven Nissen

Celebrities used in the Selling of Sickness

- Robert Wilson, author of “Feminine Forever”
- Model Lauren Hutton
- Soul diva Patti LaBelle



Feminine Forever

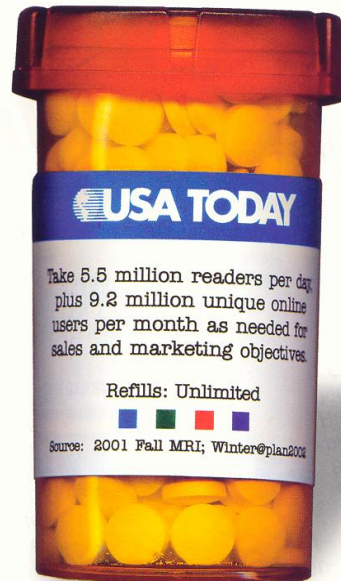
by Robert A. Wilson, M.D., 1966

Espoused the theory that *menopause is an estrogen deficiency disease that needs to be treated with estrogen....*”

- *“Without estrogen replacement therapy women are destined to become “sexless caricatures of their former selves... the equivalent of a eunuch...”*

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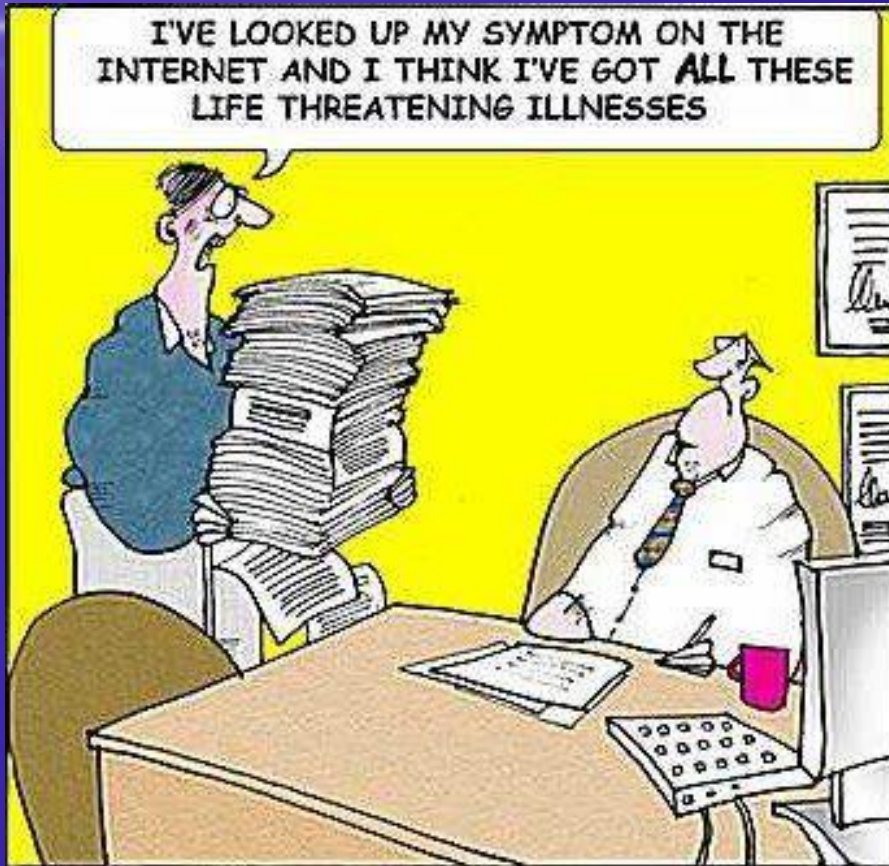
*DISEASE
MONGERING AND
THE NEW DSM
(DSM V)*

The new DSM V “Pre-dementia”



With the new DSM-V,
'Pre-dementia', a new category
of mental illness known as “mild
cognitive impairment” is the
first time the label of will apply
to whole populations.

Cyberchondria



J'ai cherché toute mes symptomes sur Internet et je pense que j'ai toutes ces maladies mortelles.

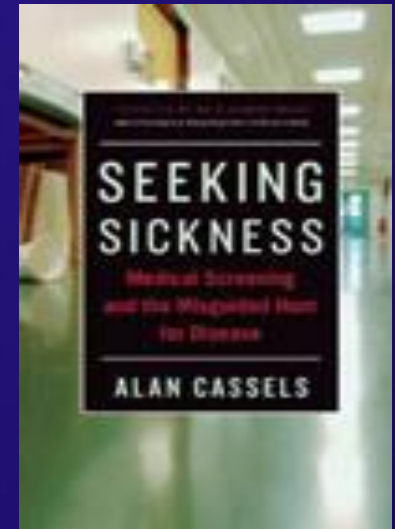
Can we add 'Cyberchondria' to the list of new mental health diagnoses.?

“One in six people suffering from cancer, heart and other serious diseases risks being saddled with a psychiatric diagnosis just because they are worried about their illness or spending more time on the internet researching their symptoms than the American Psychiatric Association (APA) thinks good for them.”

– Dr. Allen Frances, Psychology Today

Part of Disease-Mongering is looking for “pre-disease”

- “Pre-dementia”
- “Pre-hypertensive”
- “Pre-diabetes”
- “Pre-hypercholesterolemia”
 - Cholesterol testing which drives much
unnecessary, expensive, and sometimes
harmful drug treatment.



In Canada, if government regulation prevents you from advertising the drug what do you do?

You advertise the disease

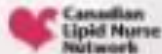
Which would you rather have, a **cholesterol** test or a final exam?

If any of these apply to you, talk to your doctor about having your cholesterol tested:

- Woman 50 years or older
- Man 40 years or older
- Heart disease (angina, heart attack, coronary bypass, stroke, angioplasty)
- Diabetes
- Family history (mother, father, sister, brother or grandparent) of heart disease or high cholesterol
- Two or more of the following:
 - Overweight
 - Physically inactive
 - Smoker
 - High blood pressure

For many, the first sign of heart disease is a heart attack. Did you know that one out of two adult Canadians is at risk of developing heart disease because they have high cholesterol? And that cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in Canada?

High cholesterol is a major risk factor for heart disease but managing your cholesterol can be quite simple.



The Canadian Lipid Nurse Network is a national network of lipid nurses. The Canadian Society of Lipidologists is a national organization of lipidologists. Both organizations are committed to providing the highest quality of care to patients with lipid disorders.

QU'EST-CE QUE VOUS PRÉFÉRERIEZ AVOIR, UN TEST DE CHOLESTÉROL OU UN EXAMEN FINAL?

OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER

Case No. 5541-95

Name J.B.

Overweight No

Age 52

Sex F

Cause of Death Silent attack

Call toll-free at 1-877-4-LOW-LDL
(1-877-456-9535) or visit
www.makingtheconnection.ca

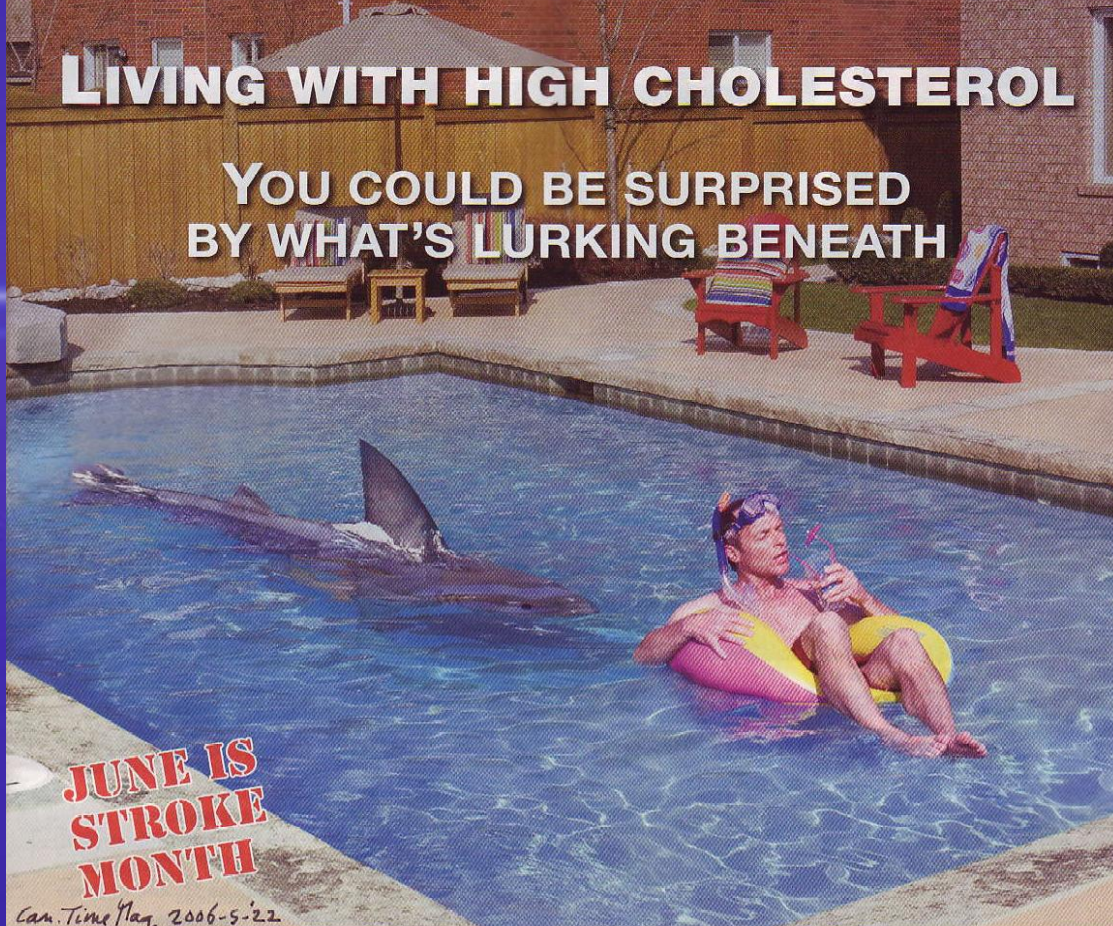


and you will receive this
free booklet describing
the connection between
cholesterol and
heart disease.

Making the
Connection
www.makingtheconnection.ca

LIVING WITH HIGH CHOLESTEROL

YOU COULD BE SURPRISED BY WHAT'S LURKING BENEATH



**JUNE IS
STROKE
MONTH**

Can. Time Mag. 2006-5-'22

Don't delay. Take control of your cholesterol now.

Some risks can be managed. One of them is your high cholesterol, which **can lead to cardiovascular disease such as a heart attack or a stroke.**¹ Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in Canada and **about one quarter of heart attack sufferers do not survive.**²

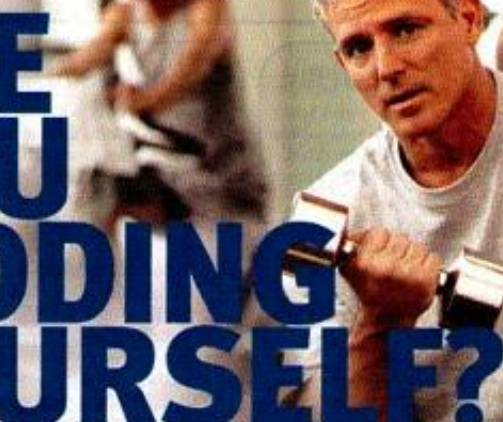
Life is precious, so why not take measures to reduce unnecessary risk? **High cholesterol is manageable.** A healthy lifestyle is an essential part, but sometimes not enough. So it may be necessary for your doctor to incorporate other measures.

Since high cholesterol is a risk factor for heart attack and stroke, why take a chance by doing nothing about it? You may not feel high cholesterol, but you could feel its impact. **Make the Connection. Join the millions of Canadians who are taking action, because you could be surprised by what's lurking beneath.**

Talk to your doctor or, for more information, call **1-877-4-LOW-LDL (1-877-456-9535)** or visit **makingtheconnection.ca**

Make the Commitment.

1. Risk Factors – Cholesterol. Heart and Stroke Foundation, 9/22/2001.
2. Statistics Canada, Causes of Death 2002.



ARE YOU KIDDING YOURSELF?

A LOT OF PEOPLE THINK EXERCISE AND HEALTHY DIET ARE ENOUGH TO LOWER HIGH CHOLESTEROL. FOR 2 OUT OF 3, IT MAY NOT BE.

Did you know, more than 80% of people who have had heart attacks have high cholesterol? For 2 out of 3 people with high cholesterol, diet and exercise may not be enough. If you haven't been successful in trying to lower your cholesterol on your own, stop kidding yourself. Talk to your doctor about your risk and if Lipitor is right for you. You can also learn more at lipitor.com or call 1-888-LIPITOR.

- When healthy diet and exercise are not enough, adding Lipitor may help.
- Along with diet, Lipitor has been shown to lower bad cholesterol 39-60% (average effect depending on dose) and Lipitor is FDA-approved to reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke in patients who have heart disease or risk factors for heart disease. These risk factors include smoking, age, family history of early heart disease, high blood pressure and low good cholesterol.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION: LIPITOR is not for everyone. It is not for those with liver problems. It is not for women who are nursing, pregnant or may become pregnant.

If you take LIPITOR, tell your doctor if you feel any new muscle pain or weakness. This could be a sign of rare but serious muscle side effects. Tell your doctor about all medications you take. This may help avoid serious drug interactions. Your doctor should do blood tests to check your liver function before and during treatment and may adjust your dose.

Common side effects are diarrhea, upset stomach, muscle and joint pain, and changes in some blood tests.

INDICATION:

LIPITOR is a prescription medicine that is used along with a low-fat diet. It lowers the LDL ("bad" cholesterol) and triglycerides in your blood. It can raise your HDL ("good" cholesterol) as well. LIPITOR can lower the risk for heart attack, stroke, certain types of heart surgery, and chest pain in patients who have heart disease or risk factors for heart disease such as age, smoking, high blood pressure, low HDL, or family history of early heart disease.

LIPITOR can lower the risk for heart attack or stroke in patients with diabetes and risk factors such as diabetic eye or kidney problems, smoking or high blood pressure.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.



LIPITOR
atorvastatin calcium
tablets

DON'T KID YOURSELF

Please see additional important information on next page.

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lipitor.com

*This kind of Canadian “reminder ad” would be illegal in the US**



** U.S. “black box” warning of serious psychiatric & cardiac risks*



*No message, except the
key one:*

“Talk to your doctor.”

If
Someone
guessed your age
Would they
be Right?

Act Your Inside Age.
Your Inside Age is waiting to be discovered at Celebrex.ca

CELEBREX[®]
TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR.

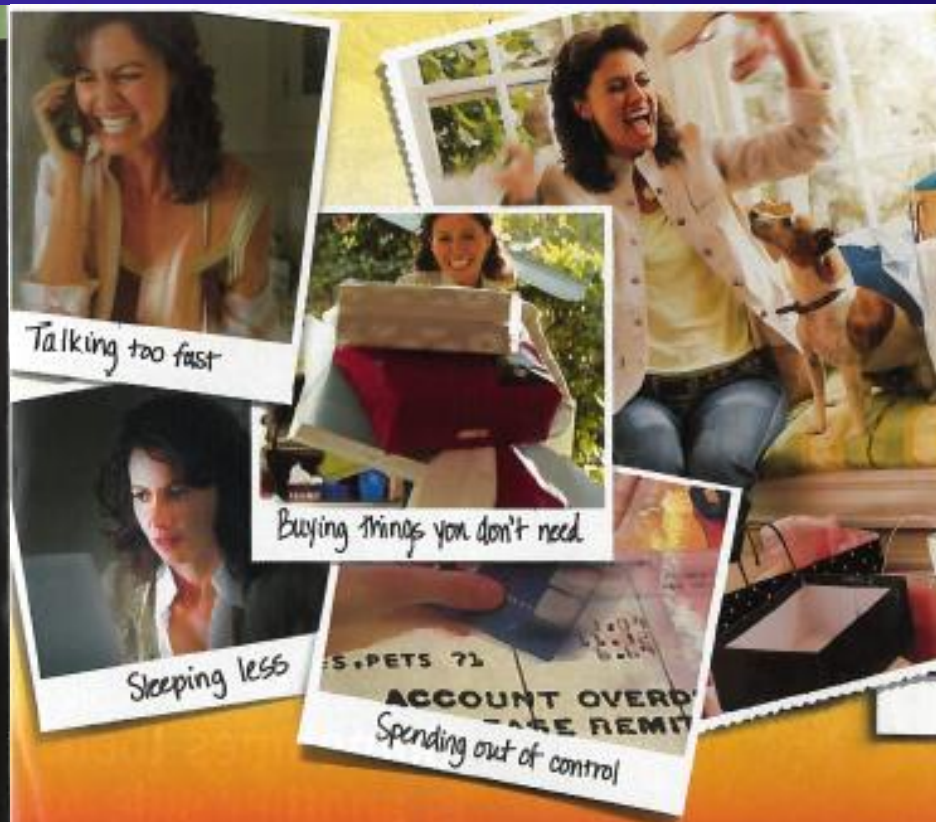
By Pfizer Inc. used under license. © 2012 Pfizer Canada Inc. Kikkand (Duloxetine) (M) (20) Printed in Canada

Good Times, Canada's magazine for retirement Dec 2012



Sometimes there
is another side to
depression

© 2007 Novartis Pharmaceuticals USA, Inc. 200727 796



It could be bipolar disorder

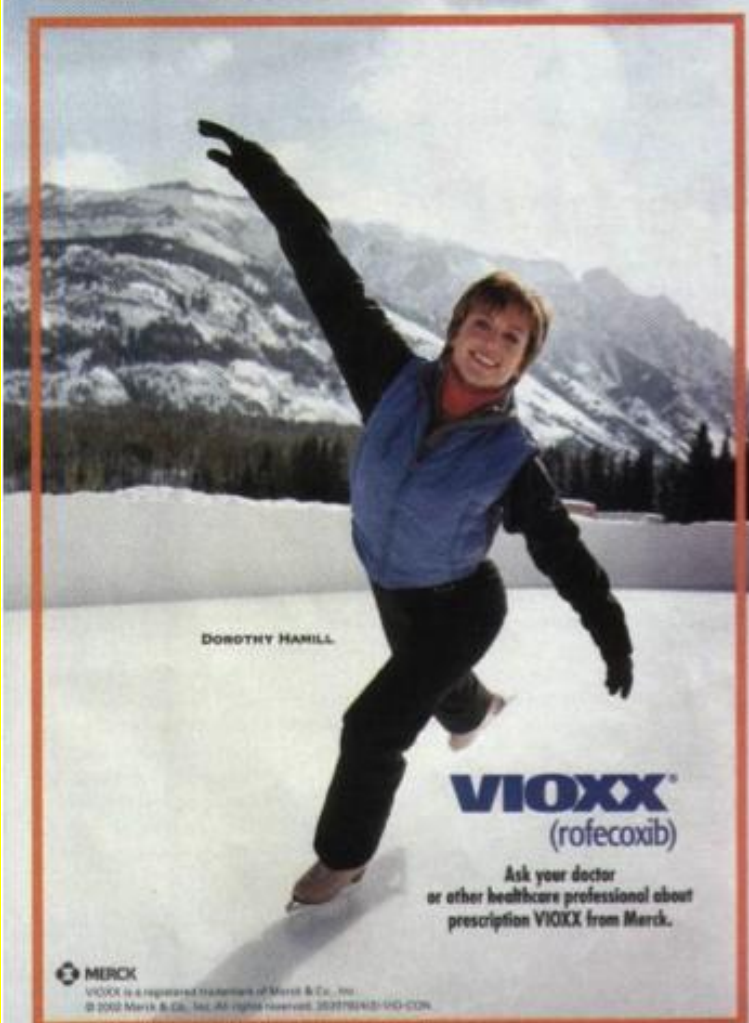
Like many people with depression, treatment may have made you feel better. But after you stopped feeling "down," maybe you started feeling way "up." You may not realize that these symptoms could be the main sign of bipolar disorder.

Depression is often recognized first. There may be weeks, months, or even years between your high and low moods.

No one's to blame. Bipolar disorder is a chemical imbalance and millions are undiagnosed or diagnosed incorrectly.

You may need treatment for bipolar disorder, not for depression. You'll likely need to know about all of your symptoms to make the correct diagnosis and to prescribe treatment to control your highs as well as your lows.

Vioxx (rofecoxib) for arthritis



DOROTHY HAMILL

VIOXX[®]
(rofecoxib)

Ask your doctor
or other healthcare professional about
prescription VIOXX from Merck.

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*(Dorothy skates
around the dangers
of Vioxx)*

DÉLÉGUÉS MÉDICAUX

PROMOTING HEALTH or pushing drugs?



A critical
examination of
marketing of
pharmaceuticals

Are pharmaceutical companies the best place to get prescribing information?

*Are family physicians receiving the information needed for safe prescribing from pharmaceutical sales representatives?
(Mintzes et al)*



WHY TREATING INSULIN RESISTANCE ISN'T SOMETHING THAT CAN WAIT.

Insulin resistance may be the #1 cause of progressive loss of glycemic control.

"The aim of antidiabetic therapy should be to prevent or at least delay the complications of type 2 diabetes by treating the underlying abnormalities that lead to this disease, the most important of which is arguably insulin resistance."
M. Kozlowski, Diabetes, Obesity and Metabolism, 2006

Insulin resistance (IR) is recognized as playing a central role in the pathogenesis and clinical course of type 2 diabetes.¹ Indeed, IR has been shown to be present in as many as 11 out of 12 patients with type 2 diabetes.² In fact, it may be that IR is one of the reasons progressive loss of glycemic control is so prevalent.

Expert opinion increasingly supports early treatment of IR.³ Shouldn't the prompt treatment of IR be a key consideration for your type 2 diabetes patients?

ask GlaxoSmithKline

What does the research say about physician/industry interaction?

- The Pharmaceutical industry spends about \$40,000 per doctor per year marketing their products.
- About half goes to free samples--a very effective marketing technique. Psst: “the first one’s free...”
- Most doctors believe: “How can I be influenced? It’s only a pen (or a pizza)?”

What do professional organizations like ACP-ASIM say about Physician-Industry Relations?

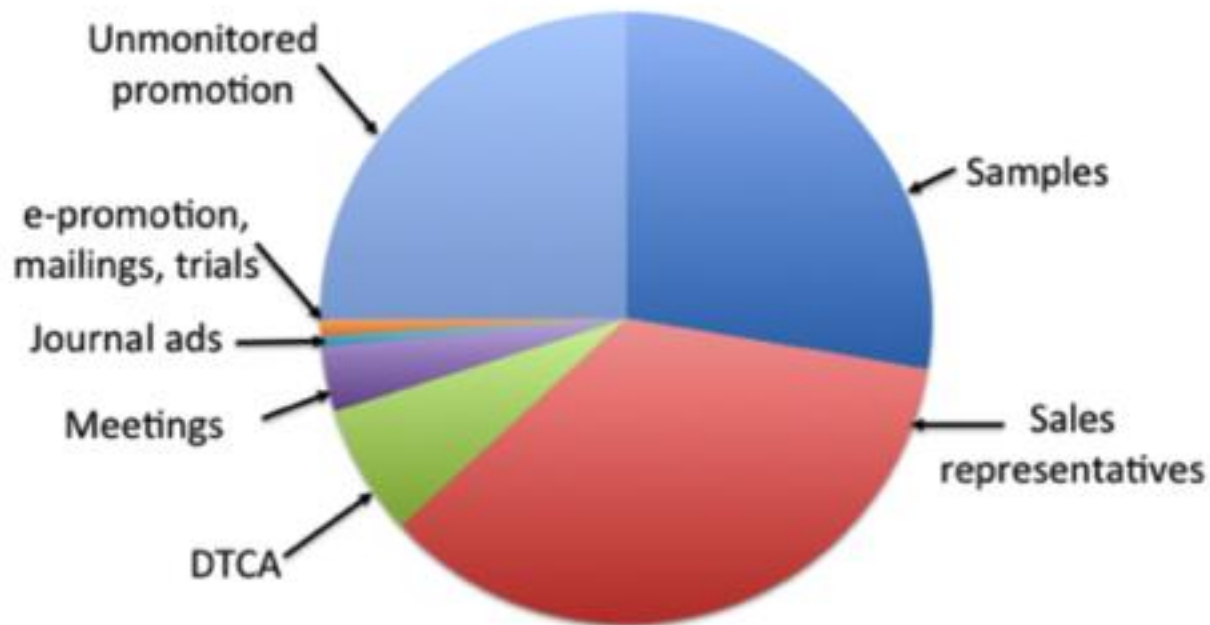
- *“Physicians frequently do not recognize that their decisions have been affected by commercial gifts and services and in fact deny industry's influence.”*
- *“Research, however, shows a strong correlation between receiving industry benefits and favoring their products.”*

Ann Int Med 2002:136:000

Where does the promotional budget go?

Gagnon and Lexchin, PLoS Medicine 2008

**US\$ 57.5 billion in promotional spending
in the U.S. in 2004**



Comparative study of sales reps activities in Canada, the US and France: Research Team

- Vancouver: Barbara Mintzes (UBC), Joel Lexchin, York University (co-PIs); Jim Wright, Ken Bassett (TI), Aaron Tejani (TI & Fraser Health), Line Gu enette (TI & Conseil du M edicament), Steve Morgan, Morris Barer (CHSPR), Alan Cassels (U Vic) Ellen Reynolds
- Montreal: Marie-Dominique Beaulieu, Andr ee Boucher, University of Montreal
- Sacramento: Michael Wilkes, UC-Davis
- Toulouse: Genevieve Durrieu, Jean-Louis Montrastruc, University of Toulouse; Florence Vandeveld, Prescrire, Union R egional des M edecins Lib eraux (URML)

Drug safety withdrawals and ongoing safety controversies

- Heavily promoted medicines

- Rofecoxib (Vioxx)
- Sibutramine (Meridia)
- Bextra (valdecoxib)
- Cerivastatin (Baycol)
- Rosiglitazone (Avandia)
- Estrogen-progestin therapies (Prempro)
- Varenicline (Champix)
- Rosuvastatin (Crestor)
- Olanzapine (Zyprexa), quetiapine (Seroquel) and risperidone (Risperdal)
- Salmeterol (Serevent)
- *And many others...*

FINAL SCORES

Pistons hammer out win

■ Detroit fights way to 79-76 victory against Cleveland for 1-0 series lead. NBA, 1, 6C



By Gregory Thomas, Getty Images

Pistons spirit: Chris Webber on way to win.

NO. 1 IN THE USA



By Frank M. Reuter, Fox

Finalists: Jordin Sparks and Blake Lewis.

Voice battles style

■ Jordin and Blake go for it all in American Idol showdown tonight, 1-2D

Tuesday, May 22, 2007

Newsline

■ News ■ Money ■ Sports ■ Life



By Marc Genney, The Reader (VA), USA TODAY

Panel views massacre sites

■ Appointed group probing Virginia Tech rampage wants shooter's health records. Above, panel chief Gerald Massengill, 2A

Palestinian camp attacked

■ Second day of Lebanese army offensive is raising concerns about a civil war, 7A

GE selling plastics unit



Diabetes drug called heart death risk

■ A study finds that Avandia raises heart attack risk by 43% and cardiovascular death risk by 64%.

■ The FDA issues safety alert but does not ask the drug's maker to take any action.

■ Doctors and politicians raise questions about the FDA's oversight in light of previous red flags.



Bloomberg News

By Steve Sternberg
USA TODAY

Nine months ago, the drug company Glaxo-SmithKline posted a study along with dozens of others on an obscure company website.

Yet neither the company nor the FDA took additional steps to warn the public until Monday, when a fast-tracked study released on the Internet by a major medical journal prompted the agency to issue a Safety Alert warning of a "potentially significant" excess risk of

Global carbon levels spiraling

Report points to China's growth

By Dan Vergano
USA TODAY

Warnings about global warming may not be dire enough, according to a climate study that describes a runaway-rain acceleration of industrial carbon dioxide emissions.

Fueled by rapid growth in coal-reliant China, rates of carbon dioxide emission from industrial sources increased from 2000 to 2004 "at a rate that is over three times the rate during the 1990s," says a report released by the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Carbon dioxide, released when coal, oil and natural gas burn, is a major greenhouse gas, so named be-

Conclusions

- Over half the time, not a single harmful effect or contra-indication was mentioned
- Less than 5% of promotions included at least 1 serious and 1 non-serious AE
- Significant differences in Toulouse
 - Free samples and ‘drug lunches’ rare
 - More information on common AE, contraindications, product information
 - *But no Serious Adverse Events mentioned in 94%*

Gifts....



- Create relationship, obligation
- Cost money -- patients pay.
- Erode professional values, damage image of profession.
- Influence behavior.

» *JAMA 1989;262:3448*

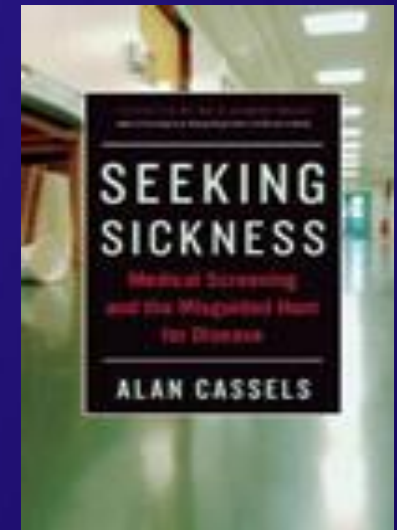


Is there a “Free Lunch?”

**BMJ 31 May 2003
(Volume 326, Issue
7400)**

A cornucopia of screening....

- Whole Body Scan
- Blood Screening (high cholesterol)
- Cancer Screening: Breasts and Prostates
- Colon and Cervix screening
- Eye Screening
- Mental Health Screening
- Self-screening for “Low Testosterone”
- Lung Screening
- Bone Screening
- Gene Screening



CANCER SCREENING

Screening: Why should we care?

"Overdiagnosis is threatening to become an increasingly important public health problem because of the enthusiasm for and proliferation of unproven screening tests."

-- Dr. Michael S. Lauer of National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute in Bethesda, Maryland

Screening: the problems of detecting Pseudodisease

“Physicians cannot easily ignore diagnoses made with screening tests because it is impossible for them to determine whether their patients have real disease or pseudodisease.

“Therefore, physicians prescribe tests, medications, procedures, or even surgical procedures, all of which carry inherent risks.”

- -- Dr. Michael S. Lauer of National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute in Bethesda, Maryland

Dr. Gilbert Welch on the PSA test

"More than 2 million American men
have been unnecessarily treated for
prostate cancer..."



Alan's basic lessons* about Medical Screening?

1. People believe that an “early diagnosis” is always better (even with proof it sometimes it makes matters worse).
2. Screening programs are often introduced with no evidence of their effects (and kept going when new negative evidence arises).
3. The benefits of screening are often exaggerated while the harms are often unknown or ignored.
4. People invited for screening need balanced information, especially information on the benefits, harms, and risks of screening.

(with thanks to Imogen Evans, Hazel Thornton and Iain Chalmers, Testing Treatments, 2nd Edition)

What are the Antidotes to Disease Mongering?

- 1. Become a Healthy Skeptic*
- 2. Quality Information about drugs and diseases*
- 3. Getting real about medicine and science.*

Be a Healthy Skeptic....

- Have we allowed the pharmaceutical industry to define the disease? Ie: is this a “real” disease that requires a medical or a medicinal solution?
- How do the risks, benefits, costs of treatments compare?”

*Quality
information ...*

*“Finding good quality
information on drugs is
like finding a needle in a
haystack. Drug marketing
just makes that haystack
bigger.”*

D.R Peter Mansfield.
www.healthyskepticism.org



Look to groups independent of drug industry money...

- *The International Society of Drug Bulletins (ISDB) is a worldwide network of publications on drugs and therapeutics that are financially and intellectually independent of the pharmaceutical industry.*

- www.isdbweb.org

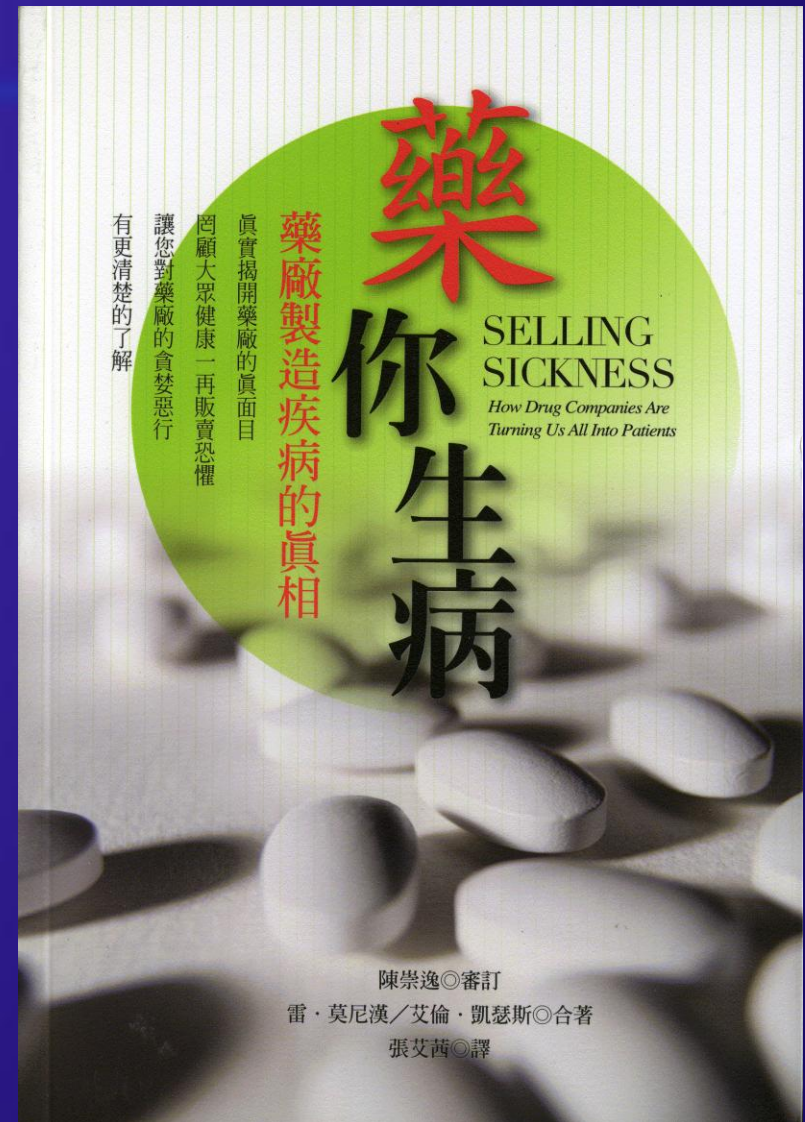


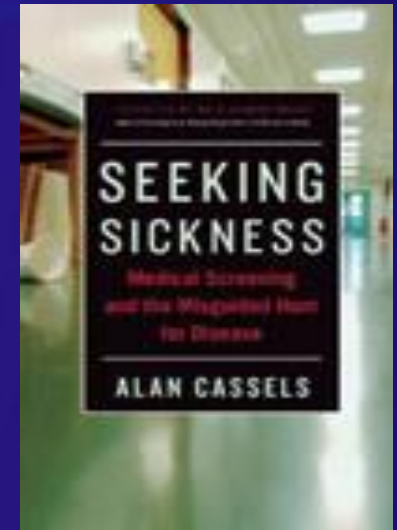
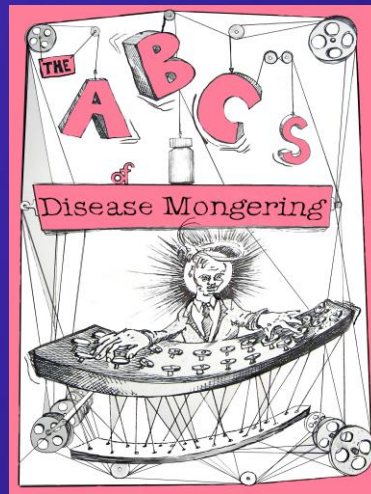
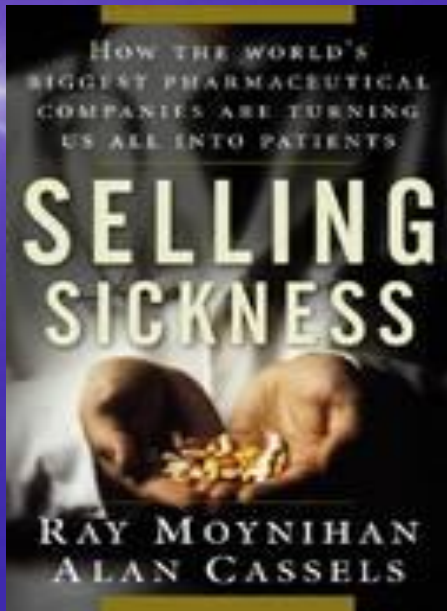
Disease Mongering is a Global Phenomenon?



*2ème Journée Internationale
de l'Indépendance Médicale (Ji iM)*

Declaring Medical
independence is
one way to keep
going the Global
conversation





“Be careful of reading health books. You may die of a misprint.”

--Mark Twain



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twitter: @AKEcassels

phone: (250) 361-3120

The screenshot shows a Windows Internet Explorer browser window displaying the website AlanCassels.com. The browser's address bar shows the URL <http://alancassels.com/>. The website's header features the title "AlanCassels.com" in a large serif font, with the tagline "WHERE MEDIA AND MEDICINE MEET" underneath. The date "Friday, April 20, 2012" is displayed below the tagline. On the left side, there is a navigation menu with links for "Inside", "Books", "Online Ordering", "Downloads", "Audio", "Links", and "Contact". Below this menu, a "Coming Soon" section is visible, featuring a book cover for "SEEKING SICKNESS". The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column is titled "The Latest Headlines" and contains three entries: "The Bitter Pill: Global's 16 X 9 documentary on the dangers of fluorquinolone antibiotics", "Do Canadian Doctors Prescribe Too Many Expensive Drugs? The Province, March 8, 2012", and "Psst, hey kid, try this... The first one's free" Why Free Drug Samples are not a Good Idea, March 2012. The right column is titled "News From The Vault" and contains three entries: "Du marketing plus que de la science", "Major Rewriting of the Statin Narrative", and "Focus research on safety". An illustration of a man reading a book is positioned above the "News From The Vault" section. The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows the Start button and several open applications: PharmaKids 21..., SugarSync Login, Where Media..., Seeking Sicknes..., and My Pictures. The system clock in the bottom right corner indicates the time is 12:55 PM.