

How the Corruption of Science Contributes to the Collapse of Modern Civilization

Part 2

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Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#), [Science and Medicine](#)

Publication Prejudice, Fraud and Deceptive Favoritism

During the past decade, scientific prejudice, bias and outright deceit has been endemic to peer-reviewed scientific literature, especially in the medical and psychiatric fields. Medical journals have been thoroughly hijacked by the pharmaceutical industry as have departments at universities and research institutions that are principally funded by private interests. It is no longer a secret that industry-funded studies inordinately convey positive results. Positive research is published; negative research is suppressed and buried. Consequently the reality of robust and honest medical research is skewed and distorted. Physicians and medical clinics thereby only get a small peek into the actual safety, efficacy and contraindications of the drugs later peddled to them by pharmaceutical sales reps.

In 2009, Harvard's Dr. Marcia Angell, a former editor for the prestigious *New England Journal of Medicine* wrote,

"It is simply no longer possible to believe much of the clinical research that is published, or to rely on the judgment of trusted physicians or authoritative medical guidelines. I take no pleasure in this conclusion, which I reached slowly and reluctantly over my two decades as an editor." [1]

Later, the editor of *The Lancet*, Dr. Richard Horton stated,

"The case against science is straightforward: much of the scientific literature, perhaps half, may simply be untrue."

A large percentage of published studies and trials have either not been reproduced or failed to be reproduced. For example, in 2012, a scientist and his team at Amgen attempted to reproduce 53 published cancer studies and only succeeded in reproducing six. In another project published in *Nature*, only 39 of 100 psychology studies could be replicated. [2] Although Horton is optimistic that the proverbial cat is out of the bag and the medical community has been given warning, he despairs that "the bad news is that nobody is ready to take the first step to clean up the system." [3]

Doctors at Children's Hospital Boston undertook the task of reviewing 546 drug trials listed in the government's Clinical Trials database. They found that industry funded trials showing

a positive results were 70 percent more likely to be published than research funded by federal health agencies.[4]

In 2010, a multi-institutional review of studies for twelve antidepressant drugs that cumulatively enrolled over 12,500 patients was published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. The group, representing researchers from Oregon Health and Science University, Harvard, the University of California Riverside and others, identified a deeply biased and deceptive trend in publication of these drugs' respective trials that was highly selective. Thirty-six of the 37 favorable studies were published. On the other hand, only 3 of 36 unfavorable trials found their way into print.[5] The consequences are obvious. By portraying the image that over 90 percent of studies confirm the value of antidepressant drugs, while almost the same number of adverse trials are buried, the entire risk-benefit ratio of these drugs has been magically altered by sleight of hand.

Next is the deceptive intentions behind ghostwriting on private industries' behalf. The habit of private corporations reaching out to public relations firms and independent technical writers to ghostwrite articles on behalf of their research and commercial products first came to light about a decade ago. Nevertheless the practice continues and in fact has become more common during the last several years. Ghostwriting has become a global cottage industry. Although ghostwriting is highly regarded as improper, it is not illegal.

Parallel to the alarm bells being rung that scientific journals were publishing increasingly amounts of junk science, there was also the growing problem of scientific authors' personal biases due to their financial ties to private interests and hence the very research and products they were positively writing about. For many decades this was not considered a serious problem, but increasingly authors would hide their financial conflicts-of-interest.

Consequently, the most respected science journals require authors to reveal their associations and conflicts-of-interest with private companies and private for-profit institutions that may compromise the data's objectivity in their articles. To get around this loophole, companies reach out to ghostwriters who can paint themselves as independent and conflict-free to submit favorable articles.

The ancient Greek physician Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, stated, "Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food." Unfortunately this millennium-old tenet was forgotten in modern civilization long ago. Enter the agro-chemical giant Monsanto, which has its fingers in the majority of food products consumed in the US. Monsanto has become notorious for relying upon a wide network of ghostwriting resources to intentionally undermine governments' regulatory agencies and deceive the public. The company has been caught numerous times for contracting public relations firms and wooing compromised writers for over a decade. Per a California court ruling in favor of a plaintiff farmer who came down with cancer, the company's flagship weed-killing chemical glyphosate or Roundup is under growing international scrutiny as a carcinogen. Monsanto again is relying upon its army of goon ghostwriters to conduct damage control.

Journalist Carey Gillam has been a close investigator and watchdog over Monsanto's shenanigans for many years. In 2016 the journal *Critical Reviews in Toxicology* published a "special series" of science articles reviewing glyphosate's carcinogenic potential. The World Health Organization had already ruled the chemical might cause cancer, and European health officials were seriously deliberating on banning the herbicide from the continent.

“Four independent panels” from the journal declared, “Neither any Monsanto company employee nor any attorneys reviewed any of the Expert Panel’s manuscripts prior to submission to the journal.” However Gilliam’s investigation into manuscripts released during the litigation found this was a complete lie. One of Monsanto’s leading scientists not only reviewed the manuscripts but also edited them. In one internal email within the company, the Chief of Regulatory Science had admitted he reviewed an entire document with suggestions for omissions and a few edits of his own. Other internal documents identify ghostwriters and strategies for recruiting outside scientists to compose articles giving the weed-killer credibility. Attempts to have the papers retracted from the journal have yet to be heeded.[6]

Besides ghostwriters, corporations hide behind shadowy non-profit organizations, front groups and shell think tanks that project the public image of being legitimate and expert scientific institutions. This strategy has been a means to covertly get corporate messages out under the illusion of being generated by independent scientists.

For example, a flurry of studies have been appearing in recent years to prove that sugar-loaded sodas and beverages are substantially contributing to the nation’s obesity and Type 2 diabetes crises. This message is reaching the public. Soda consumption has dropped by 25 percent.

To counter the scientific assault on its revenues, Coca-Cola — the world’s largest manufacturer of junk sugary beverages — teamed up with a corporate sponsored non-profit, the Global Energy Balance Network (GBN), to promulgate the message that “weight-conscious Americans are overly fixated on how much they eat and drink while not paying enough attention to exercise.” GBN, which has recruited many prominent scientists and health professors, swears by its independence from Coke’s influence. However, Coke started the non-profit initiative with a \$1.5 million startup donation. Since its founding, the partnership has unleashed a media blitz across medical journals, professional conferences, mainstream media and social networks to get Coke’s message out. New York University professor of nutrition and food science Marion Nestle, has labeled the GBN as “nothing but a front group for Coca-Cola. Coca-Cola’s agenda is very clear: Get these researchers to confuse the science and deflect attention from dietary intake.”[7]

While it is easy to blame private industry for producing the junk science appearing in peer-reviewed journals, we mustn’t lose sight of the corruption within the publications and among senior editors as well. The reason is simple: There is far too much financial incentive for professional journals to approve and publish corporate funded research. An article confirming the therapeutic value of a new drug, for example, can go a long way to bring enormous revenues to publishers. Pharmaceutical firms will order thousands of copies of the article to be disseminated throughout their sales force and sent randomly to physicians, medical schools, clinics and hospitals. *The Lancet* receives 41 percent of its income from reprints purchased by drug makers. The American Medical Association’s journal gets a whopping 53 percent.

Finally, Big Pharma engages in a form of bribery to get journal editors to assure their research gets into print. Jessica Liu at the University of Toronto’s Medical School conducted an analysis of payments US drug makers made to 713 editors employed by 52 high impact medical journals. Fifty percent of editors were identified playing this corporate game and received payments for services that included preferential treatment towards article submissions and appointing peer reviewers. Liu and her colleagues estimated that the

mean payment for general articles was \$28,100; for research submissions, \$37,900.[8] The worst case is the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* with all of its 35 editors on the take. Cumulatively, the journal's editors received almost \$15 million in "bribes" from Big Pharma.[9]

Corporate Control of Scientific Information

Private corporations have full and complete control over the proprietary research and trial data in their possession. This means they have the discretion to decide what data to release or not. In the case of the pharmaceutical industry the US government makes no demands for a company to release all its clinical trial data and results for any given drug or vaccine submitted to the FDA or CDC respectively for approval and licensure. This is also true for "selective publication" about studies in medical journals.

In 2008, the French multinational pharmaceutical company Sanofi completed 92 studies on drugs in their pipeline. Only 14 were submitted and approved for publication. What should we think about the remaining 78 trials that were withheld?[10] Clearly it would be foolish for financial reasons alone that Sanofi would want its negative trial results to appear in peer-reviewed literature. The professional medical community and institutions rely heavily on the scientific publications to keep abreast of the latest studies and news. Nevertheless, federal authorities would not require Sanofi nor any pharmaceutical firm to submit research data that might jeopardize its approval on issues of safety, serious adverse effects and clinical efficacy. Consequently federal reviewers are only being provided with trials and data favorable to Big Pharma's bottom line.

Dr. Steven Nissen is a highly respected cardiologist at the prestigious Cleveland Clinic who worries about the demise of independent research outside of pharmaceutical control. Among the targets he has investigated has been Glaxo's blockbuster diabetes drug Avandia. Unable to acquire original patient information from the drug maker, Nissen turned to the internet and "stumbled upon a cache of data belonging to Glaxo," which had been submitted during a lawsuit filed by former New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer.[11] In addition to discovering that only 15 of 42 clinical trials for Avandia had been published, the company had been suppressing the data that the drug increased risks of heart attack by 43 percent. Nissen published his findings in the *New England Journal of Medicine*; two days later the FDA slapped a "black box" warning on the drug.

Nissen also uncovered a story about Glaxo's antidepressant drug Paxil that was equally disturbing. The company's research had shown that children on Paxil were twice more likely to have suicidal thoughts than kids taking a placebo. Nevertheless Glaxo had withheld this information from health officials and the medical community.

However, Nissen's challenges did not end there. Among the deplorable tactics corporations adopt to protect their commercial interests, according to the Union of Concerned Scientists, is "scientific coercion." This includes harassing scientists and institutions that bring to light corporate misconduct or raise obstacles to their revenue flow. Companies will go a long way to silence their opponents in the scientific community, including litigation threats and putting pressure upon institutions and universities to enact job demotion, loss of tenure or blatant censorship. In retaliation Glaxo let loose its attack dogs to defame and discredit Nissen. The hitmen included Dr. Valentin Fuster (Chairman of Glaxo's educational foundation), Peter Pitts (senior vice president at the Manning Selvage and Lee public

relations firm that represents Glaxo), and Douglas Arbesfeld (and FDA communications consultant). Scathing articles against Nissen appeared in the *Washington Times*, *Nature* and *Clinical Practice Cardiovascular Medicine*. A caustic email was also sent out to the wider media deriding Nissen's credibility.[12]

Others stories include direct covert bribing of countries' health officials to get sympathetic support for a drug approval. This was the case of Eli Lilly allegedly bribing Swedish officials to get its antidepressant drug Prozac approved. Dr. John Virapen, a former Eli Lilly executive in sales, blew the whistle on his personally bribing Swedes.[13] In 2012 the US SEC slapped the company with a \$29 million settlement for bribing government officials in Russia, Brazil, China and Poland through offshore accounts to push its schizophrenia drug Zyprexa and antidepressant drug Cymbalta.[14] The corporation later in 2013 repeated a similar crime by bribing Chinese physicians to start prescribing Prozac.[15]

These are only a few examples among a litany of others that have been reported upon extensively by sincere investigative journalists and alarmed scientists. We mustn't take likely the extreme measures private corporations will descend in order to silence critics and remove barriers to their economic bottom line.

Manipulation of the Media

Turn to any major television network and we inevitably find advertisements for pharmaceutical drugs. Even the drugs themselves that are being promoted tell us something about the networks' viewing audience: middle years and older who are aging and at a higher disease risk for the drugs broadcasted to their ears. There is nothing illegal that would prevent the mainstream media from receiving gratifying fees to advertise products from the pharmaceutical industry. What we are less clear about are any contractual conditions between the private advertisers and the networks over journalist reporting about health news or findings that are directly negative about the specific drugs being plugged for in the ads. Only the US and New Zealand governments actually permit drug advertisements on television networks. So again, this an example of a special relationship that exists between federal agencies and the drug companies. Big Pharma had to first succeed in seducing federal FCC officials to win access to America's airwaves.

In 2016, the FDA had a major announcement and selected a small group of media firms, including National Public Radio, to release the news. But there were conditions, known as close-hold embargoes, that demanded journalists could only interview and ask questions to sources that were officially sanctioned by the federal agency. Seeking outside comments was forbidden. The FDA's intention is clear: to control the flow of information and assure that press reports are stamped with the agency's seal of approval. Upon hearing of the FDA's repression of journalist integrity in the science media, the journal *Scientific American* filed a Freedom of Information Act request.

The publication uncovered a dark secret of the FDA's deception to mislead the media and public by creating "a coterie of journalists" who would do the FDA's bidding. These journalists are given the privilege of receiving advance notice about science news before everyone else. Reliable independent journalism relies on pursuing outside sources to receive comments and verification for accuracy. Although the FDA had claimed it ceased close-hold embargoes on reporters, the practice has continued unabated and is now embedded in the FDA's media strategy. Many of the medical and health stories coming out of the FDA have followed this embargoed principle. The results are that all of the media outlets parrot the

same FDA directive. Journalist watchdogs, according to the article's author, become the FDA's "lapdogs." Reporters are then reduced to "stenographers." [16]

Shortly after the release of the controversial documentary Vaxxed, co-directed by the discredited British physician and GI specialist Dr. Andrew Wakefield, we undertook and published our investigation into the shadows pulling mainstream media's strings to demonize the film. The film was not intended to be an anti-vaccine diatribe. Rather it told the true story about a senior vaccine scientist at the Centers for Disease Control, Dr. William Thompson, whose guilty conscience motivated him to turn whistleblower. Dr. Thompson released thousands of pages of classified documents to an independent professor and House Representative Bill Posey that contained unquestionable evidence that the CDC had intentionally covered-up its data showing a direct correspondence between the MMR vaccine and rising autism rates among African American boys by as much as a 240 percent increase. In fact, Rep. Posey spent years trying to get Thompson to testify under oath before a House subcommittee and was consistently blocked by CDC pressure on his colleagues. The CDC had committed an enormous crime against the African American community. If Thompson were permitted to give testimony to the American people, the entire vaccine industry would have been jeopardized. The industry's profits and survival is far more important than the lives of small Black children. And the media was equally criminal in whitewashing this story.

The question we asked ourselves was: how can a film that had not been released for public viewing become the target of such vicious attacks by numerous news outlets within a 72-hour period? In addition, beneath all of the media's criticisms, we identified a single suspicious written template that all the journalists had been relying upon to report from. What might account for this anomaly? Clearly, there was no independent journalism being permitted within ABC, CNN, MSNBC, the UK's *Guardian*, *Time Magazine*, the *Washington Post* and *LA Times*, *New York Times*, *Forbes*, *Vanity Fair*, *Rolling Stone* and many others. Nor did any of the journalists ever view the film. The entire case was noxious.

Many federal agencies have sophisticated public relations departments. In the case of the CDC, its media activities have more in common with an intelligence-gathering operation. To try to find the source for why so many mainstream journalists can recite the identical mantra to denigrate the film Vaxxed, as well as vaccine safety and vaccine-autism associations in general, we identified a joint program between the agency and the Association of Health Care Journalists (AHCJ). Scores of health editors and reporters through the nation's leading mainstream media corporations have passed through the CDC's Atlanta campus through this alliance to be indoctrinated in national public health policies. Journalists who complete the program receive special privileges, including access and instructions to the CDC's surveillance database and publications to assist in their investigative reporting.

In addition, these journalists join the CDC's exclusive club to receive advanced notices about stories to report and prepared scripts to work off of. An example of a CDC script disseminated to these journalists instructs what and how to report collective fear during the influenza season in such a way that people will rush with their kids to their local pharmacies to get their flu shots. [17]

Fear-mongering is one of the more successful strategies to seduce the public to adhere to a specific message that benefits the fear monger. Monsanto succeeded in this emotional scheme to persuade California's electorate away from voting in favor of GMO labeling. By shifting

the debate away from GMO's health issues to an economic threat that would increase families' food if bills if labeling were to be approved, people voted on their financial rather than health fears. Political candidates from both parties engage in this practice consistently. Yet perhaps the largest dose of propaganda to generate fear ritually takes place during every annual flu season. The media barrage warning the public of their pending death from a flu infection is completely orchestrated out of the CDC, its advisers and consultants, and its broad network healthcare affiliates.

Ironically, on its website, the CDC vows "to base all public health decisions on the highest quality of scientific data." Yet as Dr. Peter Doshi at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine points out, when it concerns the flu vaccine, the CDC's motto couldn't be further from the truth. Among all public health policies, flu vaccination programs are not only the most aggressively forced upon the public, but also the most scientifically deceitful. Doshi notes that upon close examination of the CDC's flu vaccine policies, "although proponents employ the rhetoric of science, the studies underlying the policy are often of low quality and do not substantiate official claims. The vaccine might be less beneficial and less safe than has been claimed, and the threat of influenza appears overstated." In his evaluation published in the *British Medical Journal*, the flu vaccine is an example of government "disease mongering." [18] During the 2016-2017 flu season, the government purchased as much as 168 million doses of the vaccine; that is a lot of doses of an ineffective drug to dispense.

Conclusion

In the early 1990s, there was a glimmer of hope that safe and effective drug development might get on the right track. The emergence of a movement within the medical establishment known as Evidence Based Medicine (EBM) has been touted as one of the great medical advances of the twentieth century. EBM has become a dominant paradigm in the modern medicine and all medical research institutions and medical schools adhere to it. It is most prevalent theory in use today to determine the accuracy of peer-reviewed journal articles, clinical trials and medical claims to improve healthcare decisions. [19]

One of EBM's early and greatest achievements was the creation of the world renowned Cochrane Database Collaboration, a network of 37,000 professors, doctors and researchers from over 130 countries, that performs meta-analysis on existing scientific literature for pharmaceutical drugs, vaccines, medical devices and supplemental products to determine their health claims. As we have detailed, the journals increasingly fail to maintain high standards for the research published and are riddled with authorship violations with author conflict-of-interests and ghostwriting that have threatened the entire integrity of reliable medical literature reaching those who daily diagnose and treat patients. Although many excellent Cochrane meta-analysis reports were released to show that many drugs and medical procedures were in fact ineffective, unnecessary and even dangerous, the citadels of medical bureaucracy and national health ministries paid little heed. This was the case for reports on human papillomavirus (HPV) and influenza vaccines, many antidepressant and anti-anxiety drugs, and statins, which fell on deaf ears.

However, today the Cochrane project, once an optimistic international and independent grassroots effort to bring sanity back to clinical medical practice and national health drug policies and regulatory processes, has fallen to the same level of corruption that now infects the entire Big Pharma-controlled medical establishment. A recent scandal indicating that the organization has been hijacked by private pharmaceutical interests is the removal of the internationally recognized co-founder of the Cochrane Collaboration, Dr. Peter Gotzsche at

the University of Copenhagen in Denmark. Dr. Gotzsche is the author of *Deadly Medicines and Organized Crime: How Big Pharma has Corrupted Healthcare*, a devastating and documented condemnation about our broken healthcare system, which earned the British Medical Association's first prize book award in 2014.

His ouster from Cochrane's Governing Board this year, and the subsequent termination of his job at the Rigshospitalet medical facility is an indication that dissent based on sound medical science is no longer tolerated. Witnessing a trend that Cochrane was progressively becoming less independent, less transparent, and compromised by a growing faction of pro-Big Pharma and its allies in government health ministries, Dr. Gotzsche made efforts to restore the organization back to its founding principles. The "power struggle between two factions," as he explains, were being waged between himself and "Cochrane's CEO Mark Wilson [who] opposes open scientific debates on the quality and reliability of Cochrane reviews and emphasizes 'brand' and 'business' rather than getting the science right." Upon receipt of email correspondence acquired from the Freedom of Information Act, it was Wilson who orchestrated Gotzsche's firing in retaliation.[20]

Thus comes to a likely end the single ray of hope within that has operated within the corporate and state-mandated medical regime.

When the Roman Catholic Church ruled over Europe, its mission was to grab and sustain absolute control over kings and queens and the masses. Dissent resulted in excommunication and even death under threats of eternal damnation in the infernos beneath the earth. This kept the population in line until brave souls, Russell's lovers of knowledge, staked their lives to publicly expose the delusional world the Church lived within. Has that much really changed over the past thousand years now that science has replaced the Church?

Rachel Carson was labeled "hysterical" by the chemical industry for bringing forth her documented health risks of DDT in her 1962 book *Silent Spring*. An editorial campaign was launched to persuade the book was deceitful and filled with fallacies. Dr. Andrew Wakefield exposed an association of gastrointestinal inflammation found in autistic children with the MMR vaccine. He never stated the vaccine actually caused autism; nevertheless he was pilloried, tried in a kangaroo court, and banished by the Glaxo-controlled British health ministry. And now there is Dr. Peter Gotzsche, and there are hundreds more who the church of medical science have demonized and destroyed for speaking up about scientific errors and against power and corruption among medicine's priesthood and its corporate lords.

The average person is hypnotized by the images science projects through newspapers, television news, serials and mainstream media health stories. Repeatedly science and medical news begins with "Experts say," or "Scientists have confirmed," or "All doctors agree..." Who are these experts, doctors and medical authorities? And why should any of us believe them? Wearing a white coat has become a sign of authority because these people are manufactured to create the impression that they possess an esoteric scientific knowledge beyond the mass's comprehension. And with mainstream media incessantly bombarding us with this fallacious image, we become subservient to believing in the power of their message. This is the medical Matrix most Americans find themselves, and the only pill worth taking is the red one offered by Morpheus to free us from the medical fascism that is ruling our lives.

At the conclusion of his essay, Bertrand Russell writes, "Science is no substitute for virtue;

the heart is as necessary for a good life as the head.” If Russell were to witness the rotten state of medicine today, he would undoubtedly conclude that medical science had surgically removed its heart years ago. This has led to the “collective passions” of our medical aristocracy being “mainly evil” giving rise to “hatred and rivalry directed towards other groups [eg., scientific and medical dissenters].” He would also acknowledge that our situation now threatens “the destruction of our civilization” as he predicted.

Russell might also opt for his second option to this regime of scientific power and control; that is, he writes, “the collapse of our civilization would in the end be preferable to this alternative.”[21]

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Notes

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