

Remembering Samuel Epstein, Pioneer in the Struggle against Cancer

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On March 18, physician, University of Illinois Chicago Professor Emeritus of Environmental and Occupational Health, Cancer Prevention Coalition chairman Samuel Epstein passed away at age-91 of cardiac arrest in Chicago.

Epstein was an internationally recognized cancer expert and its avoidable causes, especially exposure to industrial carcinogens in air, water, food, consumer products, pesticides, prescription drugs, and workplace environments.

Born and educated in England, he came to America in 1960. In Boston, he founded the Laboratories of Carcinogenesis and Toxicology, and The Children's Cancer Research Foundation.

He was appointed Senior Research Associate in Pathology at Harvard Medical School, later coming to Chicago to teach at the University of Illinois.

He wrote numerous scientific articles, many others in national newspapers, along with seven books - notably *The Politics of Cancer* and *The Politics of Cancer Revisited*, discussed below.

Based on 2012 - 2014 data, over 38% of Americans are diagnosed with cancer in their lifetimes, one of the nation's leading health problems.

Decades after Richard Nixon signed the 1971 National Cancer Act, vowing to find a cure in his State of the Union address, cancer rates proliferated to epidemic levels.

In 2018, an estimated 1,735,350 new cases of cancer will be diagnosed in America, 609,640 people perishing from the disease, according to the National Cancer Institute - the toll exceeding US combat deaths in all its wars from WW II to the present.

Cancer occurs when body cells divide and spread uncontrollably. If untreated, it metastasizes and kills. Why is the war on it being lost?

According to Epstein,

it's because "(t)he cancer establishment is fixated on damage control - diagnosis, treatment and basic genetic research - and is indifferent, if not sometimes hostile, to cancer prevention - getting carcinogens out of the environment."

"The second factor is conflicts of interests, which are significant when it comes to the National Cancer Institute (NCI), but profound and overwhelming (for) the National Cancer Society (NCS)."

These organizations are incestuously tied to the "drug industry, the mammography industry, the pesticide industry, and other such industries" that profit from cancer proliferation. It's big business. The more victims, the greater the bottom line benefits.



Epstein believed the war on cancer is winnable by avoiding carcinogenic exposure. He supported enacting laws, criminalizing corporations and their officials for knowingly introducing carcinogens into the environment.

Epstein's "Politics of Cancer Revisited" updated his earlier classic, explaining the limitations of cancer research.

He discussed case histories and political infighting on issues relating to asbestos, vinyl chloride, bischloromethylether, benzene, tobacco, red dyes #2 and #40, saccharin, acrylonitrile, female sex hormones, pesticides, aldrin/dieldrin, chlordane heptachlor, and nitrosamines.

He also focused on challenging and debunking "cancer establishment" policies and its US/UK apologists, aiding and abetting continued harm to public health.

He stressed the war on cancer is being lost because profits take precedence over human health, in his preface explaining:

"Cancer is caused mainly by exposure to chemical or physical agents in the environment. The more of a carcinogen present in the human environment, hence the greater the exposure to it, the greater the chance of developing cancer from it."

"There is no known method for measuring or predicting a 'safe' level of exposure to any carcinogen below which cancer will result in any individual or population group."

He documented occupational, environmental, prescription drug, and consumer product carcinogens. Examples include:

- diethanolamine (DEA) absorbed in the skin, used in cosmetics, soaps and toiletries;
- permanent and semi-permanent dark hair dye, producing 20% of female non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in America;
- food colorings, pesticides, fungicides, nitrites, and hormones in foods;

Most US cattle and sheep receive carcinogenic growth-promoting hormone implants (usually testosterone or estrogens).

Packaging is harmful, containing dangerous chemicals able to migrate into food and other edibles.

Epstein said hazardous prescription drugs "may pose the single most important class of unrecognized and avoidable cancer risks for the US population."

In 1992, he and three colleagues proposed "war on cancer" reforms, endorsed by 64 national cancer prevention, public health and preventive medicine experts in a statement, saying:

"(T)he generously funded cancer establishment, the National Cancer Institute (NCI), the American Cancer Society (ACS), and some 20 comprehensive cancer centers, have misled and confused the public and Congress by repeated claims that we are winning the war against cancer."

"In fact, the cancer establishment has continually minimized the evidence for increasing cancer rates, which it has largely attributed to smoking and dietary fat, while discounting or ignoring the causal role of avoidable exposures to industrial carcinogens in the air, food, water, and the workplace."

Everyone can vote with their pocketbooks. They can make responsible choices, avoiding harmful products, buying safer ones, encouraging others to do the same thing.

That's how important battles are won, by ordinary people at the grassroots - getting informed, doing the right thing, telling others, and proving where real power lies when used constructively.

Epstein explained it's easier to pollute than protect public health. Powerful monied interests influence government policymaking at the federal, state and local levels, serving their own interests at the expense of public health and welfare.

Cancer is a growth industry because of governmental failure to combat it - emphasizing treatment, not prevention.

The "cancer establishment" spread misleading information for decades, predicting lower future incidences and mortality rates, eventually eliminating suffering and deaths from the disease in all forms.

Instead, it's more prevalent than ever because of government inaction and inattention to root causes, nothing done to prohibit known carcinogens from the environment, workplaces,

food, air, consumer products, and prescription drugs.

Industry is free to produce harmful products because nothing is done to stop it.

The only message corporate predators and organizations supporting them understand is hitting them in the pocketbook where it hurts most – the most effective way to get their attention.

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