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Will Big Pharma Ever Stop Squeezing Money Out of People?

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The relationship you have with your doctor is founded on trust, but your doctor or hospital might have a stronger obligation to "big pharma" than to your health.

The below infographic created by The Law Firm highlights the impact of big pharma on Americans.

Big pharma refers to the most influential pharmaceutical companies in the U.S., and this influence goes beyond profits. On average, Americans are spending $1,112 per capita on prescription drugs, four times more than Mexico. Also, the average child has four prescriptions filled per year, while adults fill 12 each year and seniors fill a whopping 27 separate prescriptions each year.

Between August 2013 and December 2014, these pharmaceutical companies spent $3.49 billion in disclosed payments. If you've been prescribed drugs from Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer or AstraZeneca, you might benefit from knowing these companies are spending a significant amount more on marketing than on research and development. Johnson & Johnson spent more than double on marketing in 2013, a total of $17.5 billion – and these companies aren't alone. In fact, 90% of pharmaceutical companies engage in this practice.

If you're a parent, you'll be surprised to see that the two doctors earning the highest pharma profits are in family medicine and pediatric critical care. Even more, the top spending pharmaceutical company, Genentech Inc., spent a total of $388 million in payments to doctors. This company is behind the drugs Valium, Klonopin and Xenical.

These aren't the only statistics presented in this infographic – and with a thorough read, you'll be able to fully understand how you or your loved one's health could be impacted in the pursuit of profits.

Take a look at the below infographic to learn more about the power and influence of pharmaceutical companies in the U.S., and how they can be stopped.

PROFITS OVER PEOPLE

HOW BIG PHARMA'S MONEY IS AFFECTING OUR HEALTH AND OUR WALLETS

All pharma companies that produce and sell drugs and medical devices recently became required by law to disclose the amount of money they pay to doctors and teaching hospitals for promotional talks, research and consulting. This inspired us to take a closer look at the numbers and dollars, the main players and the impact this industry has on our health and our wallets.

August 2013–December 2014

PHARMA'S SPENDING:

$3.49 BILLION

in disclosed payments

WHO'S GETTING THE MONEY

681,020 doctors
1,135 Teaching Hospitals
1,565 Companies

WHO'S PROFITING?

TOP 5 HIGHEST PAID DOCTORS BY THESE COMPANIES, BETWEEN AUGUST 2013 AND DECEMBER 2014

Sujata Narayan	$43.9 MILLION	Family Medicine
Karen Underwood	$28.5 MILLION	Pediatric Critical Care Medicine
Stephen Burkhart	$24 MILLION	Orthopaedic Surgery
Sergey Yakov	$22.1 MILLION	Cardiovascular Disease
Kevin Pelley	$22 MILLION	Neurological Surgery

0 15 30 45

AVERAGE DOCTOR'S SALARY IN THE US: $166,255

It's not just practicing doctors who are profiting, but the institutions that are training the next generation of doctors. Medical and healthcare students do their training and residencies at teaching hospitals, some of which are bringing in a lot of Pharma dollars.

$361 MILLION	City of Hope National Medical Center
$46.9 MILLION	The General Hospital Corporation
$22 MILLION	Cleveland Clinic Foundation
$21 MILLION	The Unity Hospital in Rochester
$18.3 MILLION	Denver Health and Hospital Authority

WHO'S THE TOP SPENDER?

GENENTECH INC.

$388 MILLION

in payments made to 1,888 doctors

GENENTECH DRUGS	TREATMENT	SIDE EFFECTS
Valium	To manage anxiety disorders	Drowsiness, blurred vision, hallucinations, hypotension
Klonopin	Treats seizures, panic attacks and anxiety	Muscle weakness, headaches, psychosis
Xenical	Diet Pill intended for obese patients	Oily stools, severe liver and kidney problems

WHAT ELSE ARE THEY SPENDING $$ ON?

PHARMA SPEND ON MARKETING VS. R&D

A report from GlobalData found 90% of "Big Pharma" companies spend more on marketing than research and development. At the top of the list:

Johnson & Johnson	$17.5 BILLION on marketing in 2013	$8.2 BILLION on R&D in 2013	MORE THAN DOUBLE!
Pfizer	$11.4 BILLION on marketing in 2013	$4.8 BILLION on R&D in 2013	72% DIFFERENCE!
AstraZeneca	$7.3 BILLION on marketing in 2013	$4.3 BILLION on R&D in 2013	70% DIFFERENCE!

HOW MUCH ARE WE SPENDING?

AMERICANS SPEND MORE PER CAPITA ON PRESCRIPTION DRUGS THAN ANY OTHER COUNTRY

US SPENDS **$1,112**

AMERICANS SPEND **4X MORE** than Mexicans

CANADA SPENDS $772	GERMANY SPENDS $741
KOREA SPENDS $487	SWITZERLAND SPENDS $730
IRELAND SPENDS $783	MEXICO SPENDS $279

Time Magazine reported that in 2014:

AMERICANS FILLED **4.3 BILLION** PRESCRIPTIONS

SPENT A TOTAL OF **$374 BILLION** PRESCRIPTIONS

+13% SINCE 2013

HOW MUCH ARE WE REALLY TAKING?

AVERAGE AMERICAN:

+12 PRESCRIPTIONS DRUGS in a single year

The Kaiser Health Foundation conducted a study measuring the number of prescriptions filled in 2015 per capita.

CHILDREN AGED 0–18	ADULTS AGED 19–64	SENIORS 65+
4 PRESCRIPTIONS	12 PRESCRIPTIONS	27 PRESCRIPTIONS

WHAT % OF WORLD'S PAIN MEDS ARE WE TAKING?

IN 2010:

THE UNITED STATES

5% OF WORLD'S POPULATION,

CONSUMING

99% of the world's hydrocodone

88% of oxycodone.

THE SOLUTION STARTS WITH DOCTORS

Should doctors consider the approach of "conservative prescribing", outlined in a report by Dr. Gordon Schiff?

Rx

PATIENT NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Say no to Drugs, When Possible: Prescribing drugs should not be the first answer. Docs should focus first on:

- Prevention
- Encouraging improvements to diet and exercise
- Seeking drug-free therapy

Go Strategic: If drug treatment is not urgent and critical, defer prescribing drugs. Be cautious about switching a patient's drugs and don't start more than one drug at a time.

Learn the Facts: Find unbiased, substantive research on any new drug before prescribing.

Teach the Facts: Be more vigilant in educating patients about:

- Potential adverse effects
- Withdrawal symptoms.

_____ Date

_____ Signature

References

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