

***From the book *Dissent in Medicine, Nine Doctors Speak Out (on the issues of How Much Science is there in Modern Medicine?; Corruption in American Medicine; The Inaccuracies of Medical Testing; Hospital Births; Immunizations; Cancer Treatment; and Environmental Issues)*, Robert S. Mendelsohn, MD, George Crile, MD, Samuel Epstein, MD, Henry Heimlich, MD, Alan Scott Levin, MD, Edward R. Pirickney, MD, David Spodick, MD, Richard Moskowitz, MD, George White, MD, Contemporary Books, Chicago 1985**

In 1984 Columbia College in cooperation with The New Medical Foundation presented a conference to address controversial issues in medicine by distinguished national medical authorities named *Dissent In Medicine* in Chicago, Il. Nine eminent physicians from all over the United States spoke to an auditorium packed with their colleagues. The theme of the conference was the propensity of the nation's medical heirarchy to lie to the public. Among the speakers was Dr. Alan S. Levin, M.D., professor of immunology at the University of California Medical School in San Francisco. He stated that "Practicing physicians are intimidated into using regimes which they know do not work. One of the most glaring examples is chemotherapy, which does not work in the majority of cancers."

He elaborated further...

DRUG COMPANIES BRIBING DOCTORS

A major reason why health care is in such a shambles is that the medical establishment has allowed itself to be bought off by the pharmaceutical industry, whose prime motive is profit. In the book *Dissent in Medicine - Nine Doctors Speak Out* (1985), Dr Alan Levin writes:

"Health care in the United States has become a megabillion-dollar business. It is responsible for over 12 percent of the gross national product. Revenues from the health industry, which currently exceed \$360 billion a year, are second only to those of the defense industry. True profits are much higher. [In 1991 the US had spent \$750 billion on health care. It has been estimated that by the year 2000, annual health care costs in the US will have increased to at least 1.5 trillion dollars. It is not difficult, then, to see why this industry is so appealing to corporate investors. Many industrialists determined to profit from health-care products have encountered one major obstacle: Practicing physicians remain the primary distributors of health care products. Physicians, who have traditionally existed as independent entrepreneurs do not fit easily into the corporate mind-set. If corporations did not have control over their distributors (the physicians) they would not be able to guarantee profits to their stockholders.... Thus, we need not wonder why senior executives of major health care-oriented corporations have decided to woo physicians into their camps.

"Pharmaceutical companies have curried the favor of practicing physicians for many years... As the cost of development and marketing of pharmaceuticals increased [during the 1960's], the drug companies efforts to attract the allegiance of practicing physicians intensified.

"Not only did drug company operation costs increase markedly, but the rewards of the marketplace rose tremendously.... The increase in revenues brought competition which led to a nationwide increase in drug advertising. Advertisements in medical journals and public magazines were popularized by carefully controlled news releases associated with 'medical breakthroughs.'

"These advertising efforts, which began with gifts to practicing doctors and medical students, have become a massive campaign to mold the attitudes, thoughts, and policies of practicing physicians. Drug companies hire detail men to visit physicians' offices and to distribute drug samples. They describe the indications for these drugs and attempt to persuade physicians to use their products. Like any other salesman, they denigrate the products of their competitors while glossing over the shortcomings of their own. Detail men have no formal medical or pharmacological training and are not regulated by any state or federal agencies. Despite their lack of training, these salesmen have been very effective. Their sales campaigns have been so successful within the United States that the average physician today has virtually been trained by the drug detail man. This practice has led to widespread overuse of drugs by both physicians in their everyday practice and the lay public.... *With the exception of heroin and cocaine, 85 percent of all drugs currently abused in the streets are manufactured by 'ethical' drug companies.... Gross sales forecasts from these 'ethical' drug companies deliberately include profits made from illicit sales to drug peddlers.*

"The drug industry woos young medical students by offering them gifts, free trips to 'conferences', and free 'educational material.'

UNIVERSITY SCIENTISTS - THE WILLING PAWNS

Drug companies employ many means in bribing doctors and medical institutions. Dr Levin writes:

"Young physicians are offered research grants by drug companies. Medical schools are given large sums of money for clinical trials and basic pharmaceutical research. Drug companies regularly host lavish dinner and cocktail parties for groups of physicians. They provide funding for the establishment of hospital buildings, medical school buildings, and 'independent' research institutes.

"The pharmaceutical industry has purposefully moved to develop an enormous amount of influence within medical teaching institutions. This move was greatly facilitated by several factors. The first was the economic recession, which caused a marked constriction in federal funding for research programs. Academic scientists lacked funding for pet research projects. The second was the tremendous interest that academic scientists held in biotechnology, the stock market, and the possibility of becoming millionaires overnight. The third is the fact that academic physicians tend to lack real clinical experience. In the university, the physician is an expert in esoteric disease, end-stage disease, and animal models of human disease. He or she has little or no experience with the day-to-day needs of the chronically ill patient or the patient with very early symptoms of serious illness. As the academic physician does not depend upon the good will of the patient for his or her livelihood, the patient's well-being becomes of minor consideration to him or her. All these factors make the academic physician a very poor judge of treatment efficacy and a willing pawn of health industrialists.

"Pharmaceutical companies, by enlisting the aid of influential academic physicians, have gained control of the practice of medicine in the United States. They now set the standards of practice by hiring investigators to perform studies which establish the efficacy of their products or impugn that of their competitors...."

"Practicing physicians are intimidated into using treatment regimes which they know do not work. One glaring example is cancer chemotherapy...."

"Your family doctor is no longer free to choose the treatment modality he or she feels is best for you, but must follow the dictates established by physicians whose motives and alliances are such that their decisions may not be in your best interests. [Emphasis added.]"

Dr Alan Levin is an Adjunct Associate Professor of Immunology and Dermatology at the University of California. He is a Fellow of the American College of Emergency Physicians, the College of American Pathologists, and the American Society of Clinical Pathologists. Dr Levin is also a recipient of fellowships and awards from Harvard Medical School and other medical institutions, and was Director of various research laboratories.

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