

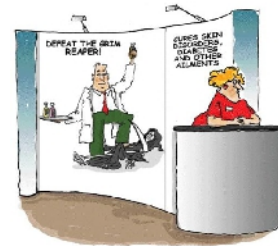
Also Good for Gout, Hair Loss, Female Troubles and Lack of Energy...

By Marvin Ross

When Dr. Terry Polevoy, a Kitchener, Ontario, anti-quack advocate, invited me to join him and Dr. Eva Briggs, a physician from Marcellus, New York, to investigate the latest products available at the Total Health Fair in Toronto, I jumped at the chance. In the past, this show delighted me with the fallacies perpetuated by its speakers and the banalities of their products.



Billed as "North America's premier natural health show", the event has been held every year since 1977 by the Toronto-based Consumer Health Organization of Canada.



The group's website describes it as "... a non-profit organization... founded in 1975. Its mission is to improve the quality and longevity of our life [sic] using the 'wholistic approach'. This approach encompasses our physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social, and economic well-being." (And, yes, they do consistently spell "holistic" with a w.)

While similar to the scores of holistic and wellness exhibits that are held around North America, this show attracts almost all the major stars in alternative medicine at one time and in one place -- the people who fill the airwaves of talk radio and TV across the continent and whose books are prominently displayed in major book stores everywhere.



The website features a very long list of "alternative" health care books, arranged by topic from "AIDS" to "Vegetarian", touching on aromatherapy, chronic fatigue, homeopathy, pet care and vaccination along the way. (Many of the books are highly suspicious of vaccination, as one might expect.)



One of the books offered is, *The Good News Is That HIV Doesn't Cause It*, subtitled, *The bad news is that recreational drugs and medical treatments like AZT do*, by Peter Duesberg -- the most prominent of the HIV deniers.

Another, entitled *BioBalance: The Acid/Alkaline Solution* states "Anxiety, depression, fatigue, panic attacks, insomnia, premenstrual syndrome, undiagnosable headaches, undiagnosable digestive disorders, weight disorders and a host of other conditions are not, as is commonly and erroneously believed, stress induced. Instead, these symptoms are almost always the result of acid/alkaline imbalances in blood biochemistry, which can be controlled nutritionally."

All this would be merely amusing were it not for the fact that thousands of people attend these shows and that these "alternative" treatments and products represent a \$4-billion-per-year industry in Canada.

Two years ago, Dr. Polevoy and I had attended that year's version of the show along with Windsor physician Dr. Tony Hammer. Both Terry and Tony, at different times, were unable to restrain their anger, jumped to their feet and raised objections with the speakers. The audience turned on us and, later, a little old lady pointed us out to a security guard who then came over to inquire if we had been disruptive and to warn us to behave.

Recent controversy surrounding the event, however, may have dampened some of the participants' enthusiasm, but not the delusions of the speakers or their zeal to sell their books and products. In 2001, there was an enormous public outcry when one of the keynote speakers was the anti-Semitic American writer and holocaust denier, Eustace Mullins. He was to have given talks entitled *The Rockefeller Medical Monopoly: The Hidden Forces Behind The Myths Of Modern Medicine and Criminality In Banking*. Organizers denied any knowledge of his racist views but canceled his visit when the Canadian Jewish Congress demanded that Immigration Canada refuse him entry into the country.

This year, Hulda Clark canceled her visit at the last moment for unknown reasons. She is the proponent of the theory that diseases like cancer and AIDS are caused by parasites that can be eliminated from the body by electrical gizmos called "zappers" and "syncrometers". The Federal Trade Commission in the U.S. has successfully prosecuted some of these manufacturers. Hulda Clark operates out of a clinic in Tijuana, Mexico, and is the author of a book called *The Cure for All Cancers*. She was to give two seminars on the use of her devices, which cost \$130 each, but she did not show up.

Another last minute "no-show" was Texas naturopath Gary Tunsy. Rumours at the conference suggested that he had been prevented from entering Canada by either customs or immigration officials because he was bringing banned products into the country. This has not been confirmed, but officials for the show did mention that he was bringing in products that could save lives and that was the reason he was banned.

Len Horowitz filled in. He is a Harvard trained dentist with a master's degree in public health. He is a frequent guest on Canadian radio and TV shows. Len Horowitz coined the phrase "iatrogenocide" and believes that vaccines and drugs "play a primary role in what amounts to genocide for profit, psychosocial control and even depopulation," according to an Internet ad for one of his tapes.

During his presentation, Len Horowitz did say that the "I.G. Farben and Rockefeller cartel" monopolizes modern medicine and that "medical deities follow the Rockefeller agenda". Sugar, coffee and pharmaceuticals, he told the audience, are addictions and he personally begins his day with a 15-ounce glass of cayenne pepper dissolved in warm water. This is an alkalizing agent, he says, so it is good for coronary artery disease and high cholesterol.

Len Horowitz said all chronic illnesses, inflammatory and autoimmune diseases require that the body be "acidified" and so he suggests drinking vast amounts of

water every day -- his formula is one ounce of water per day for every two pounds of body weight. (A 150-pound person should drink 75 ounces of water daily, he said.) Oxygenating blood is crucial, he said, since this will rid the body of diseases like HIV and hepatitis. He also claimed that ridding the body of mercury from the fillings in the mouth or by preventing vaccinations is also very important for good health.

Needless to say, many of the products necessary to accomplish this cleansing of the body (along with his books) were for sale at his booth in the exhibits section of the fair. Len Horowitz recently moved to Hawaii where he runs a health spa on 29 acres of land. He spent considerable time talking about the beauty of the location.

Many of the participants at these events are very much opposed to the new regulations governing natural health products recently introduced by Health Canada and are organizing public opposition to them. They feel that "nutraceuticals" are simply foods and should not be regulated and that health claims for them should be allowed. Therefore, the special guest heading up a panel discussion was B.C. MP James Lunney, a chiropractor, who has introduced a private member's bill (Bill C-420) that would remove so-called natural health products from the Food and Drug Act.

James Lunney seemed to take great pride in stating that the new Conservative Party may endorse his bill and help fight for alternative medicine. He said he personally does not agree that randomized control trials are the standard of proof needed, but rather that "observation is the foundation of all true science". Current treatment guidelines are suspect, he said, since 80% of them are developed by doctors who have "connections to big pharma." His goal is to divert \$25 million into research for natural health products.

The moderator was Helke Ferrie, a writer and owner of an alternative health publishing company. Helke Ferrie wrote the book on Dr. Josef Krop's dispute with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. Dr. Krop was found guilty by the College for using "vega machines" in his practice to diagnose allergies. He is somewhat of a martyr in alternative medicine circles. Helke Ferrie's publishing company puts out such works as *The Plot Against Allergy and Asthma Patients* by Dr. Felix Ravikovich, who had his licence suspended for three months in 1995 by the College for professional misconduct associated with his treatment of allergy and asthma.

Dr. Carolyn Dean was next to present her views. Dr. Dean now lives in the U.S. where she practises as a naturopath and appears frequently on TV. She is the author of a number of alternative health books such as *The Miracle of Magnesium*. Dr. Dean lost her licence to practise medicine in Ontario. She told the audience that while her mother was recently dying of leukemia -- the disease, she noted, might have been caused by her mother's use of cholesterol lowering drugs and anti-hypertensives -- she did research on deaths caused by modern medicine.

She suggested that 784,000 people are killed annually by doctors in the U.S., but thought that the true number might be five times greater. (Only 5% to 20% of medical mistakes are reported, she said, and the 784,000 are just the reported cases.) She went on to say that she lost her licence because she does not support allopathic medicine. Dr. Krop, she said, was attacked for the same reason and she claimed that some doctors have actually been driven to suicide by established

medicine, which attacks its critics. Her own problems began, she suggested, in 1990 when she told The Dini Petty Show that sugar was bad. This upset the "sugar lobby" and they set out to have her licence to practise medicine taken from her. (According to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario website, Dr. Dean lost her licence for incompetence and professional misconduct in 1995.)

Now, when Dr. Dean appears on TV in the U.S., she is not allowed to talk about depression and St. John's Wort, she says. She told the assembled faithful that the networks tell her the subject is too heavy for the audience. But she says that is not the real reason. She believes that pharmaceutical advertisers probably have a clause in their contracts with networks preventing them from mentioning anything other than prescription drug treatments.

Nutritionist David Rowland continued with that theme and claimed that 106,000 people are killed each year by drugs that are properly prescribed and taken.

U.S. psychiatrist and anti-quack advocate Dr. Stephen Barrett describes David Rowland on his website (www.quackwatch.org) as "one of Canada's leading promoters of nutrition nonsense" and says "his writings and speeches advocate 'freedom of choice' and decreased government regulation of the health marketplace. His entrepreneurial activities have included practising as a 'nutrition consultant,' writing articles and booklets, publishing a magazine, operating a correspondence school, and issuing 'credentials' for 'nutrition consultants'."

David Rowland was referred to as a Ph.D, but this is what Dr. Barrett has to say about that: "His Ph.D. degree was obtained from Donsbach University, a non-accredited correspondence school operated by Kurt Donsbach, a chiropractor who has engaged in so many health schemes that nobody -- including the man himself -- can document all of them with certainty."

David Rowland was also introduced to the audience as a member of the New York Academy of Sciences. The implication was that this membership gave greater credence to what he had to say. A call to the academy revealed that he is a member, but that members are not elected. Anyone can join. All that is required is payment of the membership fee. Membership does not mean that the work members do is endorsed by the academy, the public relations official stressed, although that is sometimes attempted. A recent example, he said, was the dictator of Turkmenistan, who joined and then claimed he was elected until the academy objected.

Needless to say, David Rowland was totally opposed to regulation of the industry -- but not, he said, because of the issue of increased cost for compliance with good manufacturing practices his company and others will be required to follow under the new legislation. "The issue," he stressed, "is your lives and safety" and the "censorship" being applied by Health Canada in its rules against the making of unproven claims for products.

That same point was advanced by herbalist Rich DeSylva who stated "big pharma is trying to regain market share from herbs and that is why we are seeing these new regulations. It is not about safety and efficacy, but about the bottom line." Safety and efficacy issues are a red herring, he said, since all vitamin and herbal products on the market are simply foods.

The only MD on the panel who is still practising medicine as an MD was Dr. Zoltan Rona of Toronto -- a noted media personality and book author who sells vitamins and supplements over the Internet from his office. Dr. Rona complained about the fact that prescriptions are GST exempt, but similar products purchased outside of pharmacies are not. He too took a turn at doctor bashing by telling the audience that one-quarter of what you eat keeps you alive while the other three-quarters of what you eat keeps your MD alive.

Dr. Rona added that doctors are the third leading cause of death in the U.S., responsible for 250,000 deaths per year and that an American is 9,000 times more likely to be killed by a doctor than by a gun owner. (We were tempted to ask how many were killed by doctors who owned guns but, considering the crowd's reaction two years ago, decided it was better to keep quiet.)

In addition to James Lunney, the main force behind the lobby is Belleville, Ontario, paralegal Trueman Tuck who runs the friendsoffreedom.org and taxtyranny.ca websites. He pointed out that "a goliath" is running the world in the "pharma cartel" and that this is the "most monstrous conspiracy in the history of mankind that has been going on for 100 years".

While Friends of Freedom did have a booth, they were just as busy selling a product called "Miracle II" (MII) as they were rallying the anti-government opposition. This product was typical of the many products being sold at booths in the exhibit area. MII is composed of three bottles. The saleslady told us the product was invented by Hulda Clark and has been around for 27 years. It cures skin disorders (and there were some very convincing before and after pictures) along with diabetes and numerous other conditions as it detoxifies, de-acidifies, balances PH and balances energy.

Patients take seven drops of Bottle One in water internally and then put one teaspoon of Bottle One and one teaspoon of Bottle Two (a shampoo) into their baths. When they finish bathing, they rub their body with the contents of Bottle Three (a lotion). Dr. Briggs asked how the saleslady found the product and was told that she was a researcher. We asked her what she researched and her answer was the vague "all sorts of things." She did not seem too enthused about answering questions about herself and did not claim that she took the product or that she had been "cured" of anything.

She then asked us if we had any specific health issues that the three-bottle therapy might help cure and I mentioned Crohn's disease. From the look on her face, I suspect she did not know what that was; she handed me her personal sales book to look it up, while she went to serve a lineup of customers interested in the bottles. (Crohn's was listed and all it said was for me to take seven drops of Bottle One in milk or water daily.)

With the product priced at \$29.95 a bottle (show special of three for \$85.00), I thought it prudent to stick to my GI specialist even if he was more likely to kill me than Charlton Heston or a member of his National Rifle Association.

While some of the people touting "alternative" treatments may well be sincere in their belief that they can be effective, it would seem that many more are simply buying into the public's naiveté -- and cynicism.

That cynicism, one suspects, is just one more manifestation of the fact that it is -- and always has been -- very hard to know whom to believe. Combine that with the natural (if not holistic) urge to make a fast buck and the result is fairs like these.

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