

The Grouse House Gazette

Thoughts and Observations on Music, Nature, and Politics, from the Catskill Mountains

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HOW SICK ARE YOU OF PHARMACEUTICAL ADVERTISING? NO OTHER INDUSTRY CORRUPTS THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM MORE THAN OUR DRUG MANUFACTURERS

It has gotten to the point that I can't watch ANY television in "real time".

I DVR EVERYTHING... including news broadcasts... and then watch them later so that I can fast forward through the lengthy explanations of the various horrifying and sometimes deadly side effects described in the endless stream of pharmaceutical ads.

It seems as if a new disease... or a new name for an ailment... is being created every day. There is so much to fear... so little time... and enormous money to be made from America's terrified consumers.

The United States and New Zealand are the only two countries in the world that allow this kind of "direct to consumer" advertising from the drug companies.

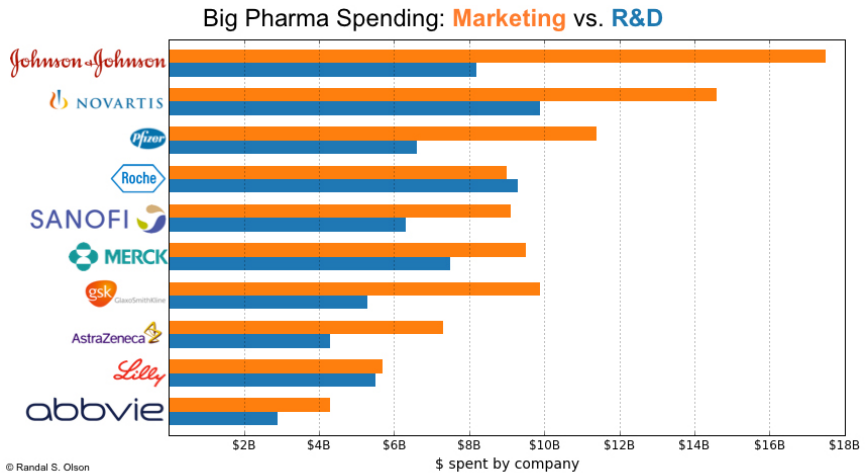
And it has been quite successful in "selling" Americans as we spent \$329 BILLION on pharmaceuticals in 2013 alone. ([The most recent figures I could find](#)).

Due to a lack of regulations we also pay FAR MORE than consumers in other countries.

Drug (Cost per month)	Canada	UK	Spain	Netherlands	US
Enbrel (autoimmune)	\$1,646	\$1,117	\$1,386	\$1,509	\$3,000
Celebrex (pain)	\$51	\$112	\$164	\$112	\$330
Copaxone (MS)	\$1,400	\$862	\$1,191	\$1,190	\$3,900
Cymbalta (depression)	\$110	\$46	\$71	\$52	\$240
Gleevec (leukemia)	\$1,141	\$2,697	\$3,348	\$3,321	\$8,500
Humira (arthritis)	\$1,950	\$1,102	\$1,498	\$1,498	\$3,049
Nexium (acid reflux)	\$30	\$42	\$58	\$23	\$305

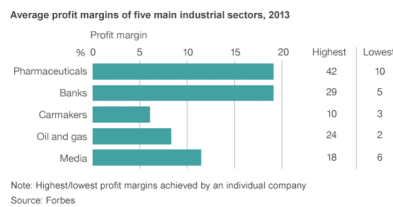
Data comes from the International Federation of Health Plans (IFHP) 2013 Comparative Price Report.

For decades we have all been "spoon fed" erroneous information that the high cost of our drugs was due to the enormous amount that the drug industry was spending on "Research & Development". But as you can see from the large chart at the top of the page... this is simply ridiculous. Just think of all of the progress that could be made in the development of new cures and treatments if the advertising money were spent on R&D?



© Randal S. Olson
Chart designed by Randal Olson from information from health research by Global Data

Now let's look at the American "drug cartel's" [profitability compared to other industries](#). And these profits are even more amazing when you consider the amount they are spending on advertising and marketing directly to consumers.



Note: Highest/lowest profit margins achieved by an individual company
Source: Forbes

So only "The Banks" have similar profit margins... which makes sense as they are the OTHER industry that is currently corrupting our failing capitalist system.

But the drug companies aren't the only ones that are funding the R&D for new cures and the treatments for diseases.

As taxpayers... WE ARE ALL contributing to the costs of new drugs... as the government also obviously funds research.

But wait... there's more...

We also have hundreds of the well meaning "charity" organizations raising money

through people running around city parks... biking cross-country... or asking for donations in public places.

All contributing to new drugs that will be SOLD BACK TO US by the companies.

Companies that spent \$88 BILLION on marketing and advertising in 2013 alone.

And since 2013... their ad spends have greatly increased. You can see it on TV!

But it hasn't always been this way.

Direct to consumer advertising only became legal through an act of congress (signed by President Reagan) in 1985.

But it really exploded in 1997 when the FDA relaxed the rule which obligated the companies to include a detailed listing of drug side-effects. Today these warnings are read through quickly in the second half of the ads while being accompanied by beautiful images of couples shopping in flea markets... walking on the beach... or doing ANYTHING to take your mind away from the horrifying statements being made in the background about possible fatal reactions or adverse impacts.

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And the advertising obviously works...

Before the deregulation of this type of advertising in 1985... the drug companies could only market directly to our doctors.

Just before the law was changed in 1985... a man named Joe Davis... who wasn't a doctor or a pharmaceutical employee but rather a salesman of packaged goods in other industries... came up with the idea of advertising drugs directly to consumers.

Davis approached a friend of his named William Castagnoli... who was an executive with a medical advertising company called Medicus that had been selling to doctors for years. Together the two of them came up with a way to "pull the drugs through the system" directly to consumers through marketing. Originally they got around the "side-effects" issues with a "loop hole" of not actually naming the drug being promoted. As they only mentioned the possible benefits of the "hypothetical" drug... while including instructions for people to "ask their doctors" for further information.

The drug with which they first tried this was named Seldane. And without naming it they promoted Seldane as an antihistamine that did not cause drowsiness. Consumers then asked their doctors about it... where they were directed to Seldane.

It worked!

The sales of Seldane jumped from \$34 million dollars in 1985 to an astounding \$800 million the next year!

After seeing "the writing on the wall"... pharmaceutical lobbyists went to work and got the laws changed. Which resulted in the pharmaceutical industry EXPLODING toward the enormously profitable industry that we have today. [CLICK FOR SOURCE](#)

The vast majority of the television commercials that you see these days are for NEW drugs. Not because they are revolutionary or will help more people... but because they are the most profitable. Why waste money on generic cheaper drugs? Every dollar spent promoting the drugs equals four dollars in retail sales. In a 2011 study it was learned that advertised drugs sold NINE TIMES the amount of new drugs that were NOT advertised.

Which is why you have seen all of the blood thinner drugs that have come on the market recently to replace the older and cheaper Warfarin. And when the drug companies are confronted about ads that seem to "skirt" the FDA laws with some of their advertised pronouncements... they

actually refer to the first amendment and freedom of speech! But the FDA does sometimes contest ads with Google being fined a half a billion dollars due to their "Adwords" pop-ups encouraging Americans to buy drugs from Canada. But then again... that benefited American drug companies who make far more off of Americans than Canadians due to Canada (like all of the other countries in the world) having established a regulatory drug pricing agency to ensure that their citizens were not charged excessively.

But of course... pharmaceutical lobbyists would NEVER let that happen in America.

The industry has 1,274 registered lobbyists... but the two main lobbying groups are the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, and the Biotechnology Industry Organization.

It is hard to get exact figures... but estimates are that they spend close to \$200 MILLION a year in political contributions... of which approximately three times as much money goes to GOP candidates over Democrats. [SOURCE](#)

The Republicans also worked closely with the drug lobbyists to "craft" the 2003 bill under George W. Bush to create the Medicare Prescription Drug Program. Which on the surface seemed like a great step forward for "compassionate conservatism" until you realize that it was a MASSIVE "windfall" for the drug companies with no accounting for it in the budget and a huge increase for the deficit.

Between 1998 and 2005 prescription drug lobbyists spent MORE THAN ANY OTHER LOBBYING GROUP on "buying" political candidates in Washington... and that includes the defense industry!

And I'm sure the numbers have gone up quite a bit in the past ten years.

When Jonas Salk developed the polio vaccine in 1955 he GAVE it to the people of the world... refused to patent it...and we all stood in line as children to receive it for FREE... as Polio was eradicated.

How times have changed...

For a GREAT overview on this very significant issue check out this brilliant video from John Oliver... [CLICK HERE](#).

Gilbert Hetherwick

hetherwick@me.com

Please write to be added or removed from my list

BACK ISSUES: www.GHGAZETTE.com

I WATCH FOX... SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO!

When I wake up in the morning I frequently turn on Fox News and their apocalyptically cheerful morning show "Fox & Friends". It's like having a toothache... where you occasionally bite down on it... just to see if it's still there.

While watching... I sometimes run quick "fact-checks" on questionable statements made by their three "mannequin" hosts...

And I sometimes send an email with a link assuming that it is being sent into an infinite abyss of darkness at Fox News...

But it still makes me feel better.

Then... this past Sunday morning... the show's host Steve Doocy... actually responded! What an honor! (I guess...)

TO: friends@foxnews.com 6:26 AM Jan 31, 2016

RE: Hacked?

Steve just said... "we all know that Hillary Clinton's email server was hacked".... But I have never read that anywhere... I have never seen that anywhere... That is just an assumption on the part of FOX News.

Gilbert Hetherwick

TO: Gilbert Hetherwick 6:44AM Jan 31, 2016

RE: Hacked?

Hi Gilbert,
I know for a fact, her server was hacked, numerous times.

Thanks for watching.

Steve Doocy

TO: friends@foxnews.com 7:04AM January 31, 2016

RE: Hacked?

Hi Steve

From your own web site.... The server "COULD HAVE BEEN" hacked..... Just as anyone's "COULD HAVE BEEN" hacked.... No definite hacking stories..... Again... bending the truth to meet your needs... Check this out... GH

<http://www.foxbusiness.com/features/2015/10/20/doj-officials-fear-foreign-telecoms-intercepted-clinton-emails-server.html>

TO: Gilbert Hetherwick 7:18 AM Jan 31, 2016

RE: Hacked?

Wrong, Gil, this is information I have from my intel community sources...

TO: friends@foxnews 7:23 AM January 31, 2016

Oh yeah.... Right... YOUR sources..... Well why isn't it being reported by anyone other than you.... A "fluff" morning show host..... Send me some legitimate links. Your quote was "we all know".... Well, if that is true... Why are you the only one reporting it from YOUR "sources"? GH

Doocy isn't exactly Edwin R. Murrow... He's more like "Howdy Doody"... GH