

Naturopaths:

We're Dying to See Them

**Your very good health –
it's worth fighting for**



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Naturopaths kill people. If you don't believe me, talk to the family of Vecko Krsteski, from Rockdale in New South Wales. He died on 26 February 2002 from chronic renal failure as a direct result of undertaking a health programme supervised by Oatley naturopaths Jeffery and June Dummett. He was allowed to waste away and was not provided with any professional traditional medical care for his condition. The Dummetts are in court now. Or you can talk to the parents of Mitchell Little, born 7 September 1999, whose 18-day old baby died after they took the advice of their naturopath, Reginald Fenn. He told them not to proceed with life-saving surgery that had a high chance of success. Fenn claimed he had a machine and some herbal medication that would cure the baby, so the parents cancelled the operation. The NSW Supreme Court found him guilty of manslaughter on 29 August 2003.

Naturopaths target the vulnerable and give them false hope. If you don't believe me, talk to my friend Ross who lives on the Queensland Sunshine Coast. His naturopath claims that wheatgrass could cure him of his cancer, so he works for her now and has learnt to grow it, and he admits that he tells people that his cancer is gone. He and his wife then sell the wheatgrass

to other cancer patients. Oh, I forgot, you can't talk to Ross — he died last month of lung cancer. You can always talk to his widow. Maybe not; she made quite a lot of money out of the wheatgrass crops, and last I heard, she was still selling it.

Naturopaths harm people's health. If you don't believe me contact the AMA about liver disease (hepatitis and cirrhosis), irritable bowel syndrome, asthma and diarrhoea caused by de-toxification products. These products are still being sold. You can also ask David's daughter. She flew across two states to get her dad to a doctor. This elderly Lismore gentleman was emaciated and was showing symptoms of paranoia and aggressive behaviour. He had spent weeks on a stewed fruit diet with supplements of herbal pills that his failing memory meant he usually forgot to take. His \$200 appointment with his Gold Coast based naturopath had given him the reassurance that he wanted to hear, that he would be restored to full health in six weeks, but by that time he had locked himself in his home to hide from the toxins attacking him from the outside world. I asked his family if they would take the naturopath to court and they said no because it was their dad's fault. They had warned him before and besides he was old. And whom could they com-

plain to anyway? Naturopaths don't take on patient responsibility; they don't even take a proper history or they would have known that he needed real medical attention, so 'buyers beware'. The family didn't want a long distance court case because it would cost too much and would be too much trouble. Besides, their dad was now able to go on a daily walk and he had even put on some weight. His GP sees him every week, so it's OK isn't it?

Naturopaths tell lies. If you don't believe me, ask the widower of Christine, a fellow breast cancer patient, who died in April this year. Her naturopath told her she had to change her diet to 75% raw food and to drink a daily glass of raw liver juice. Her naturopath also told her to give herself herbal and vitamin injections and regular coffee enemas, because this change in lifestyle would prolong her life. She was given instructions on how to give herself injections and how to make the coffee solution at home. Every night Christine would lie on an old towel on her hard, cold bathroom floor, her daughter helping her to push a rubber hose four inches into her rectum, so she could pump in the warm dark-coloured coffee juice that hung suspended in a plastic container from the bathroom doorknob. Weak and emaciated, she died two months later, much sooner than expected. According to my research, there is "no convincing data in support of this hypothesis" that this diet would help her. The research shows that the body fails more quickly because of weight loss and poor nutrition. Her daughter told me they were desperate and would try anything to keep their mother alive. Was it lies, or did the naturopath simply ignore the research?

Naturopaths are deluded. If you don't believe me, ask Susan, the little girl next door who is dying of an inoperable brain tumour. Naturopath philosophy is based on the assumption that all health conditions are caused by lifestyle, and can be cured by lifestyle changes. Susan's single mother spends \$90 per week

because her naturopath tells her it may cure her daughter. Common sense would tell you that this beautiful little child did not cause her own cancer. Only someone deluded would say so: perhaps someone who had untested remedies to sell to make money out of the desperation of a loving mother.

You can also ask my other neighbour Linda. She was continually feeling tired, so she went to an iridologist who told her she was healthy and just needed some vitamins. That was just a few weeks before Linda collapsed at work as a result of being an insulin-dependent diabetic, a diagnosis her GP would have made immediately if Linda had gone to see him. Linda never complained because she blamed herself. She knew she should have gone to see her GP, but she didn't. So she knows it's her fault because she'd been warned. So Linda says nothing. Her Prozac keeps her happy, so it doesn't really matter, does it?

Naturopaths work on guilt. If you don't believe me, then why did my friend John tell me that he was sorry he hadn't seen a naturopath sooner? He was told that he had left it too late. He was told he should have come when he was first diagnosed. Now John is dead and his family tell me the same story: if only they had gone to the naturopath sooner — the guilt is still with them. The cost was over \$400 and the books and pills were extra, but John's family told me that conventional medicine could do nothing more for him, so they had to try everything to save John, didn't they? So what did the cost matter?

Why are people encouraged to take all those pills? Herbal remedies and vitamins are not lollies: they can be powerful drugs, and they can have tragic side effects. If you don't believe me, contact the Adverse Events Hotline and ask the pharmacologists who man the phones. They'll tell you the truth: they hear it all the time. They are there to help us, but very few of us let them know when these pills make us ill — best just to push the bottles to the back of the kitchen

cupboard and try something else. There are plenty of pills to choose from, with new ones available every week, and natural means safe, doesn't it?

Advice from the pharmacist

I asked a pharmacist why he was reluctant to remove homeopathic remedies from his shelves. These pills are guaranteed by homeopaths, by up to a 30-fold dilution ('less is more'), to contain nothing but 'vital force' and 'memory' of the original natural substance. If you believe the homeopath, then water must have a short memory, because each and every water molecule has been around for billions of years and during that time has been recycled a billion times with every natural and, in more recent times, unnatural substance on the planet. So what does water remember, and what does water forget? Molecules can be seen under electron microscopes and they can split the atom, we all know that, so why has no one reported seeing anything extra — just what does this 'memory' look like, anyway, and why can't they measure that 'vital force'?

If you believe the homeopath, you can take one grain of salt diluted in a swimming pool, a few drops before meals for up to six weeks, and it will cure your stress; likewise, one grain of caffeine in the same dilution will help you sleep. 'Like cures like' is their philosophy, so why don't they want any of the original substance to remain in their final remedy? They will admit that is true. When you realize the natural substance they use as a base could be faecal matter, cat fur, anthrax, arsenic, mercury, scabies pus, metal, rocks and magnets, a wide range of acids and poisons, perhaps it's just as well. If you don't believe me, read it for yourself on the Internet: there are thousands of homeopathy sites that will sell you anything you want to cure anything you name. There's a substance for every complaint and health condition. Don't forget to add the cost of freight and the GST; express delivery anywhere, any time, any

amount; credit cards and PAYPAL accepted.

The pharmacist also told me that the hard-working men and women of his profession are fighting to keep their businesses “in the black” and will sell anything that their customers want. But it’s all right, he said. There is nothing in the pills, so they can’t possibly do any harm, and if a customer asks, and they usually don’t, he will tell them “some people say it works for them”. He told me that they have enough to do keeping up with the information and problems of prescribed medication, so they hire naturopaths to sell products from the multi-layered shelves that sit under emotive health signs, bulging with brightly coloured bottles of herbs and vitamins quoting convincing anecdotes from smiling famous faces.

They tell you that naturopaths are trained in herbal remedies, and they know all about them, don’t they? Having a naturopath in the doorway means that they don’t need to be involved. Everyone benefits, isn’t that so? The pills and potions are a good source of income, and besides, if he doesn’t sell them, other stores will. Besides, no one wants to listen: they would rather believe the continually repeated messages they are subjected to in magazines and newspapers, on the radio and on television. They would rather listen to people they barely know whom they bump into at parties, who whisper the wonders of amazing cures into willing ears. He told me that when he was younger, he had tried to help them by telling them that magnets, linseed oil and copper bracelets didn’t work, but nobody ever listened, so why bother trying any more? It’s a free world, and everything he sells is legal. He misses the profits from the cigarettes he used to sell so he has to make up the shortfall somehow. And besides, the Therapeutic Goods Administration, which monitors health products, doesn’t require efficacy of products, so why should he?

He told me that the major chains of pharmacies, including

ChemmartR, Terry White ChemistsR and The Medicine ShoppeR and Healthsense Pharmacies R come under the Mayne Group umbrella, and so do most of the non-prescription brands such as Nature’s Own™, Cenovis®, Golden Glow®, Bio-Organics™, Natural Nutrition™ and Vitelle®. They also have Faulding® and the Betadine® range of antiseptic products, which are widely used in hospitals and households.. Mayne own or have owned hospitals, medical centres, pathology, diagnostic imaging and more. With Mayne’s huge umbrella ensuring that they get the best deals for their own pharmacies, no wonder the other pharmacies are having difficulty competing.

If you don’t believe me, look in the white pages under ‘Mayne’.

Medical opinion

I asked a general practitioner (GP) why do doctors seem so reluctant to tell people that naturopathy is based on unproven and unprovable science, and that every iridology and homeopathy clinical trial has failed to perform better than guesswork. I wanted to know why the medical professionals are losing the battle against these poorly educated and ignorant charlatans. I am astounded by her reply.

It seems that GP’s, after six years as undergraduates and three years as interns, are taught ‘not to have an opinion’. Senior hospital staff make it clear that their opinion means nothing, and may even get them ‘struck off’ — so they say nothing. Could this explain why so few of them spoke up against Dr Patel at the Bundaberg Hospital? Toni Hoffman, the nurse who complained for two years, should get a medal for breaking the silence and stopping the carnage. Funny, isn’t it, we all hear about doctors who kill people, but I have yet to see a front page headline against a naturopath.

Senior cancer support staff state that their patients are entitled to use whatever complementary and alternative medicines may help them. That sounds quite reasonable,

until you realize that when it comes to taking non-prescribed remedies, the truth is often not available, or is withheld. As a cancer patient myself, I can’t ever remember seeing a list of clinical trials on natural remedies showing those that succeeded and those that failed to perform better than placebo. I have never seen a list of those that can harm you. If you don’t believe me, then why was I refused permission to include an article in a newsletter to my cancer support group as pre-reading to my ‘Natural Therapies’ presentation? The *Readers Digest* article on ‘The Truth about Natural Therapists’ is a well-researched paper by Helen Chryssides. I wanted an open and honest discussion on natural therapies, and I was denied this opportunity. It seems that cancer patients can’t handle the truth or don’t want it, so they tell me. Why not let them hear it anyway, why hide it from them?

During my presentation I don’t give my opinion. I’m not medical. I’m a physics graduate and a researcher. I talk about the history, philosophy, physics, physiology and clinical trials for a wide range of natural therapies. I give the science and the facts, and the facts are that *some naturopaths kill people.*

Naturopathy again

Naturopaths are trained in homeopathy. We know that doesn’t work, ask any chemistry student. They also learn iridology and other bizarre diagnostic tools that came out of the pre-scientific ignorance of past centuries. We know they couldn’t work — ask any physiology student. From the 20th Century they learn about flower essences, whereby the warmth of the sun transfers the ‘life force’ of a flower into the early morning dewdrops. We know that isn’t true — ask any physics student.

Naturopaths also learn about herbal remedies, but not about clinical trials it would seem, because no one seems to ask them if their remedies help or hurt you and why would they ask? The naturopaths wouldn’t know. They never bother to

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find out for themselves: they just read the labels. How can they understand? They are not required to know chemistry or physics, and none of their courses includes discussions with these scientists, so it's deliberately omitted as part of their training. I'd like to know why they are denied this knowledge: is it because it would show them the truth?

Places that offer naturopathy education seem to let anyone enrol in the courses — Grade 10 not required. A basic knowledge of science is not a prerequisite. It even costs less for you to study if you do it by video or correspondence, but no one seems to check their qualifications anyway, so what does it matter?

So the cancer support networks don't want to upset cancer patients who swear by natural therapies. I'm sorry, but I'm a cancer patient and I'm upset. I'm sorry, but scientists, medical professionals and other people who understand the flawed basic principles of these therapies, some created centuries ago when the existence of bacteria and germs was unknown, are undoubtedly also upset. I'm sure these physicians of days gone by, these good hard-working people, were just trying to find a better way to cure people than those offered in the barbarous times they lived in, but they got it wrong.

Take a stand scientists and medical professionals: get quality information out to the people about these anti-science so-called 'natural' therapies. Go to your local pharmacies and ask them to stop using iridologists and naturopaths; ask them to remove off-the-shelf medications that they know don't work and they many even suspect can harm people. Write to your medical magazines and journals and write to theirs as well. Get support from your local members of parliament, your local newspaper or any other media that will listen.

When did you ever hear a naturopath take a Hippocratic oath? When where you last given a written referral from a naturopath? Why don't naturopaths have insurance? What do you think happens to patients with treatable illnesses who are not given access to available orthodox treatments? Do they suffer or even die as a result of inadequate or delayed medical treatment?



ADVERSE MEDICINE EVENTS LINE

1300 134 237

Plea to medical practitioners

Doctors out there, you know they do. If you do nothing else, educate your patients to demand information on all their medications, both prescription and non-prescription, before they take them. Explain to them what questions they should be asking. I know your days are long and difficult, I sense your frustration and concern when you admit you don't know all the answers but you are the only ones who can protect us. I also know you really care, because you have shown me so much compassion and support during my own illness. You are brilliant people with very difficult jobs, and you are certainly unappreciated by many, but we need your help. Perhaps you fear reprisal, perhaps you are just too overwhelmed with your day-to-day lives,

but we need you to speak out. Please don't abandon us. Your silence is harming us. Do what you can, it will make a difference.

Did I mention that naturopaths kill people? Not all of them do. In fact the ones I have met are very nice people. Some conditions are certainly caused by lifestyle, and changing your lifestyle does work for these people, so for reasonably healthy people they sometimes get it right. But if they believe in their own naturopathic 18th Century philosophy, they may kill people. Look at the facts and then decide if it is just my opinion. Think about that next time you invite them in. That dying person may be someone close to you.

Visit Loretta's site:

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