

Americans pay more for health care than citizens of any other country. In 1993, we spent over 900 billion dollars, an average of \$3500 for every man, woman and child.

Yet the United States ranks as one of the least healthy nations in the developed world. Our infant mortality rate is worse than 20 other nations. People live longer on average in 16 other countries. (1)

What has gone wrong? Why are U.S. health costs rising faster than any other country even as our overall health declines?

It is important to note that the United States has the best emergency health care system in the world. Medical doctors are very successful at repairing damage to the human body and at saving lives. But these types of trauma cases represent only a small percentage of all health problems.

The majority of health problems are treated with drugs, which is a major cause of our health crisis.

- There are currently 25,000

prescription and 200,000 over the counter drugs on the market.

- The average family has 29 different drugs in their medicine cabinet.
- Americans consume over half of all of the drugs in the world at the rate of 25,000,000 an hour.

Drugs work by suppressing or masking natural bodily functions which temporarily relieves the discomfort of the symptom, but no healing occurs and the problem remains. Healing only occurs from within the body, never from the outside. Symptoms such as coughing, sneezing, fever and vomiting are methods that the body uses to eliminate germs and other foreign matter. When drugs are given for relief, the body's natural healing process is interrupted and this can cause even more health problems.

All drugs have side effects, often a drug is prescribed and a side effect occurs, the patient returns to the doctor and the side effect is diagnosed as another illness. Iatrogenesis is a term that is used to describe a health condition that is physician or drug induced.

JUST HOW SERIOUS IS THIS?

In an average year, 1.6 million people are hospitalized due to adverse reactions to prescription drugs. Up to 160,000 of these people die from the reaction. (2)

60% of all drug related emergency room visits and 70% of all drug related deaths involve adverse reactions to prescription drugs. (3)

“A drug without a side effect is not a drug at all.” *Eli Lilly, Drug Manufacturer*

Americans consume over 15 tons of aspirin a day, 19 billion tablets per year. Although thought to be a “harmless” drug, in an average year, aspirin will.

- Be responsible for over 2,000 deaths.
- Be the leading cause of kidney disease.
- Cause stomach ulcers, toxic headaches, and Reyes syndrome in children (4)

The elderly are especially likely to be medicated. Their average prescription rate is 13 per patient per year. Public Citizen Health Research Group reports the following prescription drug induced conditions per year for people over age 60.

- A million adverse reactions to prescribed drugs.
- 243,000 hospitalized due to prescription drugs.
- 163m000 mentally impaired due to prescribed drugs.
- 2 million addicted to prescription drugs. (5)

The drug industry has been able to heavily influence our health care system. 50,000 pharmacies and 700,000 outlets for drugs add up to a 60 billion dollar a year industry, which has the highest profitability margin of any business in the United States.

Medical research nearly always supports drug usage which is not surprising since the research is nearly always funded by the drug companies.

IS THEIR BOTTOM LINE HEALTH OR PROFITS?

In 1991 drug companies spent over 5 billion dollars (13 million a day) to persuade consumers to buy their products.

One third of all commercials are advertisements for drugs. The average 18 year old has been exposed to 20,000 hours of drug commercials.

Articles touting new “wonder” drugs are usually press kits sent out by drug companies. “Expert physicians are normally paid company spokesmen .

Many newscast segments about prescription drugs are nothing more than canned promotions called “video news releases” put together by the drug companies for

promotional purposes. These segments rarely warn viewers that the drugs are potent agents that cause severe, even life threatening reactions.

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