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Alternative Therapy, Genuine, Questionable, and Fraudulent

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There are three kinds of alternatives: genuine, questionable, and blatantly fraudulent.^{1,2}

Genuine alternatives are those which successfully answer the basic efficacy and safety questions¹: 1. Is it better than a placebo or doing nothing? 2. Is it as safe as a placebo or doing nothing? 3. If there is any question about safety, does the potential for benefit exceed the potential for harm?

Questionable alternatives are those which have not answered these three basic questions. Questionable alternatives represented as genuine and sold for profit are fraudulent by definition, since the definition of fraud is deception for profit.^{1,2} Quackery is the promotion of an unproven health product or service, usually for personal gain.^{1,2}

Homeopaths refer to dilution as "potentization". It is obviously (except to the delusional and the deluded) fraudulent when bottles of homeopathic remedies "potentized" by diluting past Avogadro's number, so that there is 1 molecule or less of active agent per 10 bottles, are sold with representations of potency against dysfunction and disease.²

The Eisenberg et al NEJM 1993 study promoting unconventional medicine was poorly designed so the enormous estimated total dollars spent by Americans on "unconventional therapies" which they came up with is meaningless with respect to truly unconventional "therapies". The authors inappropriately defined "unconventional therapies" as "medical interventions not taught widely at U.S. medical schools or generally available at U.S. hospitals". The categories they selected therefore included many conventional medically appropriate approaches, such as self-help groups, along with the truly unconventional scams.

The NIH Office of Alternative Medicine, created by Sen. Tom Harkin of Iowa to promote the lucrative frauds of his fellow Iowan campaign contributor, Frank Wiewel, lends credibility to fraudulent alternatives by empaneling as advisors Wiewel, his side-kick Ralph Moss, and other scam artists, who make their livings promoting frauds (Wiewel's operations alone take in over \$25 million annually), concealing from the press that there is not even preliminary evidence of effectiveness of the "alternatives" they promote (such as homeopathy,² IAT^{1,2} and the "Revici method"^{1,2}), but just evidentiarily worthless "best cases". "Best cases" are not

preliminary evidence of effectiveness, because, on investigation,^{1,2} they prove to be "cures that are not":

1. Never had the disease.^{1,2}
2. The disease was cured or remitted by genuine therapy, but the quack remedy also given was credited.^{1,2}
3. The disease was progressing silently, but erroneously believed cured.^{1,2}
4. The patient was dead, but represented as cured.¹
5. The patient had a spontaneous remission publicized as a "success", while failing to keep score, i.e. failure to mention all the failures before and after each "success".^{1,2} The law calls this "fraudulent concealment".² The difference between promoters of quack remedies and promoters of legitimate remedies is that only the latter keep score.

Our recent book trilogy covers every aspect of nutrition. We elaborate on all the nutrition-related frauds and scam artists (including chelation therapy for heart disease, Deepak Chopra, megavitamins, "antioxidants", PMS scams, "the yeast connection", etc.) in our book The Vitamin Pushers.² We provide a solid background of the facts in our book Total Nutrition.³ We discuss how what we eat, and avoid eating, can either express or suppress a genetic predisposition to heart disease, cancer, immune disorder, etc., in our book Genetic Nutrition.⁴

Quack guru pathology⁵ is that they are almost invariably either: 1. delusional and lying in the service of their delusions,⁵ or, 2. sociopathic liars (Cleckley psychopaths) who lie without conscience or remorse.⁵

Sincerely,

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References:

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2. Barrett S, Herbert V. The Vitamin Pushers: How the "Health Food" Industry is Selling America a Bill of Goods. November 1994, Prometheus Books, Amherst, NY, 536 pages, \$26.95.
3. Herbert V, Subak-Sharpe GJ. Total Nutrition: The Only Guide You'll Ever Need: From the Mount Sinai School of Medicine". (softcover; St. Martin's Press, NYC, NY, 1995). 811 pages; \$15.95.
4. Simopoulos A, Herbert V, Jacobson B. Genetic Nutrition: Designing a Diet Based on Your Family Medical History: Your genes can tell you what to eat - and avoid - to live a longer, healthier life". Hardcover; Macmillan, NYC, June 1993. 335 pages; \$22. (Genetic Nutrition will be republished Christmas 1995 as a soft-cover, titled The Healing Diet).
5. Herbert V, Kasdan TS. Misleading nutrition claims and their gurus. Nutrition Today 1994; 29(3):28-35. (See particularly section titled "Guru Pathology" on pp 29-30).