



For those of you unfortunate enough to read any articles or see any television reports featuring Professor Jonathan Waxman, a natural products-hating oncologist from Imperial College, London, indulge yourself in some soothing words from ANH's Medical Director, Dr Damien Downing.

On seeing Professor Waxman's 'personal view' issued in the pages of the British Medical Journal yesterday (*BMJ* 2006; 333:1129. For full article refer to page 3 of the following link <http://press.psprings.co.uk/bmj/november/pv1129.pdf>), Damien immediately responded via the BMJ's Rapid Response pages and posted the following response:

Professor Waxman employs and perpetuates a crucial medical myth — that, in contrast to complementary therapies, conventional therapies are all evidence-based, on sound science. But the BMJ's website Clinical Evidence reports that, of the 2404 treatments they have surveyed, only 15% are rated as beneficial, while 47% are of unknown effectiveness[†]. In his own speciality, indeed, chemotherapy for cancer was found in a 2004 systematic review of studies in the USA and Australia[‡] to improve overall 5-year survival chances by less than 2.5%. Interestingly, the review of dietary interventions he cites[†] derived an odds ratio for the effect of a healthy diet, with or without dietary supplements, of 0.90 — which appears to make them probably 4 times as effective as chemotherapy. Different end-points, granted, and a big confidence interval, but nevertheless “absence of evidence is not evidence of absence”.

Talk of “vile and cynical exploitation” could with equal justification be applied to the cancer industry, into which billions has been poured in recent decades, to very little effect. Surely Professor Waxman should be careful not to become, as discussed in the same issue of *BMJ*, “a lapdog to drug firms”?

[†] <http://www.clinicalevidence.com/ceweb/about/knowledge.jsp> ?

[‡] Morgan G, Ward R, Barton M. The contribution of cytotoxic chemotherapy to 5-year survival in adult malignancies. *Clin Oncol (R Coll Radiol)*, 2004; 16(8): 549-60.?

[†] Davies AA, Davey Smith G, et al. Nutritional interventions and outcome in patients with cancer or preinvasive lesions: systematic review. *J Natl Cancer Inst* 2006; 14: 961-73.

It's clear from Professor Waxman's response that a threat is perceived not only from dietary/food supplements used by millions to support their health, he has also taken a sideswipe at organic food, produced by a branch of agriculture supported by increasing numbers of consumers that is threatening Big Food and agri-business. The irony, of course, is that those most interested in reducing the burden on the healthcare system and spending time in doctor's waiting rooms are those that will be more likely to consume both organic foods *and* high quality food supplements. Market research has demonstrated that most users of food supplements do not use these products to counter poor diet, but rather use them to add nutrients that they believe are missing as a result of modern agriculture and food products.

The increasingly vocal hatred expressed by key opinion leaders within the orthodox medical community has to be an expression of the threat that they perceive from the millions of people around the world who continue to use products derived from nature as key components of their healthcare regime.

You'll appreciate that this is no time for anyone to put their head in the sand!

Please feel free to forward this as widely as you can to anyone who you feel may be interested.

In health, The ANH Team