

Reply to Dr. Harlan M. Krumholz's article [**3 Things to Know About Niacin and Heart Health**](#) as published in The New York Times July 2014.

3 Things You Should Know About The Above Article:

By Archie L. Tucker

Niacin is a naturally occurring vitamin, not a drug. Drug companies can't patent it; consequently, they can't make millions of dollars on it. However, it can interfere with their pharmaceutical profits of billions of dollars every year. I will not address Dr. Krumholz's motive for not doing a better job on his research, because I don't know him. His credentials sound impeccable. Mine are very modest in comparison. I have a BS in general science and a master's in education. I've taught biology and anatomy for over 42 years and have two nutrition certifications.

I've read extensively with regards to nutrition and, in particular, studied the history of niacin's impact upon various diseases. In the 1700's, Europe was experiencing an epidemic of [pellagra](#). Hundreds of thousands of people were dying of this disease later referred to as the four D's [diarrhea](#), [dermatitis](#), [dementia](#), death.

Between 1906 and 1940 this disease surfaced in the U.S where it reached epidemic proportions in the southern states, claiming the lives of hundreds of thousands of poverty stricken farmers. A well known doctor of that time, Dr. Joseph Goldberger, was assigned the arduous task of finding the cause and cure. Eventually it was found that this dreaded, disfiguring and deadly disease was caused by a vitamin B₃ deficiency. You guessed it; vitamin B₃ is niacin.

In the 1950's a very well known psychiatrist, Dr. Abram Hoffer, established a treatment regime for bipolar, depression, and schizophrenic patients. These patients, were sent to him by doctors who could not help them with the drugs available at that time. These patients not only got better, they became well. When they would go into the hospital for unrelated problems and were denied their niacin, they became schizophrenic or bipolar all over again. They would return to Dr. Hoffer and once back on their regime, they would heal.

Dr. Hoffer treated them with megadoses of niacin-- 3000 mg divided into three doses per day. You may watch an interview with Dr. Hoffer at this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0xPa0qVvl4>.

So, why, after all these years of hundreds of thousands of patients being treated with this vitamin does the extensive study described by Dr. Krumholz all of a sudden find niacin as a problem? Could it be that this extensive study was done by a pharmaceutical company? Could it be that the prestigious medical journal in which this study was published receives millions of dollars a year from pharmaceutical companies, could it be that the establishment for which Dr. Krumholz works receives millions of dollars a year from big pharma? Oh, did Dr. Krumholz forget to mention that Merck, the drug company that sponsored the study, spends or gives millions of dollars annually to the institution for which Dr. Krumholz works?

Here are some advertisements that this prestigious medical journal has put out to solicit advertising dollars from big pharma: **“Place your ad in the *New England Journal of Medicine* and make our relationship with the medical community yours”** (as seen in the November 2003 issue of *MMM*). Another advertisement, with a graphic of autumn leaves, is headlined **“You'll be *amazed* at what a *week* in *New England* can do,”** and states, **“Once a week, your advertising message is delivered to physicians who make decisions and influence the decisions of others.”**

According to the New Haven Register, “The amount spent on research by 15 pharmaceutical companies, including [Eli Lilly and Co.](#), [Pfizer](#) and [Merck](#), rose from \$7.02 million in 2011 to \$7.8 million in 2012. Do you think this could have possibly had any impact on the result of the “recent studies” conducted by Yale, and paid for by Merck? Humm...How much of that do you suppose Yale received? Go [here](#) to find out.

In closing, let's address Dr. Krumholz's three points directly:

Point 1: **“First, these new studies failed to show that niacin reduced the risk of heart disease and stroke.”** Since it has been proven that cholesterol does not cause heart disease, this is a moot point. Merck peddles billions of dollars in statins every year, and according to Fierce Pharma, the side effects of Merck's statins outdistances all of the other statins produced by other pharmaceutical companies read about it [here](#). Krumholz also didn't mention that statins which have NEVER been proven to prevent death from heart attacks have been linked to type two diabetes and muscle degeneration as well as alzheimer's.

<http://healthimpactnews.com/2014/thousands-sue-for-damages-against-cholesterol-drugs-as-big-pharma-defends-billion-dollar-industry/>

Point 2: **“...niacin causes multiple side effects, many of which are serious.”** Krumholz never mentions in his article that the study was done with extended release niacin. Liver damage can be caused with prolonged used of the extended release

product. However, this is not a trait of niacin. It is the result of the way extended release products are processed then used by the body. While, this tainted study could not possibly prove anything (because it is tainted by Merck money) he fails to mention that statins (produced by Merck) cause memory loss, respiratory problems, actual heart problems, and leads to type two diabetes as well as muscle fatigue and stroke.

Point 3: “**...there are still experts who say that the recent studies do not provide adequate evidence to stop recommending niacin...**” While I’m no expert, I have to say that I do agree with this statement.

What Krumholz didn’t mention in his article is the same company who did this study that slammed niacin as a dangerous drug, which it is not even a drug, it is a vitamin, is the same company who marketed this drug

<http://mathbabe.org/2012/02/15/how-big-pharma-cooks-data-the-case-of-vioxx-and-heart-disease/>

Bottom line: The entire study to which Krumholz refers was tainted the moment Merck put out the money for it to be conducted. Study after study has shown that women of any age or health condition should never take statin drugs because they do no good and cause multiple harmful effects. If any one group of people gain any benefit from these drugs it is men who have had one heart attack and that is very marginal and likely not worth the other risk factors.

It is totally incredible that this article not once mentioned that the study was done with extended release niacin. Anyone who has studied about niacin knows the warnings against using extended release products. This is not a trait of niacin; it is a result of processing of the product. There is no untainted study that has ever established anything more than a false liver enzyme reading and a temporary flush as a side effect of prolonged use of niacin. If you are going to have your liver checked discontinue using niacin for a week or two to preclude a false reading on your liver enzyme test. After this time, the enzymes are all back in order and you will get an accurate test.

Use this link to see how many of the researchers had conflicts of interest with Merck.

http://www.nejm.org/doi/suppl/10.1056/NEJMc1311039/suppl_file/nejmc1311039_disclosures.pdf

I have no affiliation with niacin other than I have a relative who has used it for the past two years in place of the very harmful psychotic drugs to combat schizophrenia. By the way, she uses the non flush form and the side effects she experienced from the previous several drugs no longer plague her. She takes 3000 miligrams divided doses per day. She has never had any of the side effects that Krumholz warns about. The team that did the experiment should be jailed for ever giving a known and proven harmful product of “extended release” niacin to the subjects. They had to be cognisant of the risks. Need I say more about how much big pharma and some medical institutions really care about the individual?