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## **Prevention Magazine: Propaganda Tool of the Medical-Pharmaceutical Cartel?**

By John Lowe, MA, DC

A new book published by Prevention Magazine Health Books contains some asinine and disparaging statements about DCs. In a recent issue of *Dynamic Chiropractic*, Don Petersen, Jr., publisher and editor, protested these statements. He asked, "Can it be that the medical establishment has 'purchased' Prevention Magazine and is slowly redefining health to fit its own model?"<sup>1</sup>

I read Don Petersen's editorial with interest that turned to anger. I had noticed that over the period of a year or so, the copies of Prevention Magazine coming to my office through subscription, contained more and more drug advertisements. More and more articles were written by or about MDs and their traditional drug-pushing claptrap. All of this was concealed in the sheep's clothing of wholesome living and a preventive lifestyle.

Then, in the January, 1990 issue of Prevention, came an article, the purpose of which was so obvious to me that my outrage boiled over.<sup>2</sup> The article was on a subject I know well: chronic fatigue syndrome, also called fibrositis, fibromyalgia, and chronic myofascial pain syndromes.<sup>3,4</sup> Because I'm familiar with this, the ethical bankruptcy of the article was immediately obvious to me.

To start with, the front cover of the magazine deceitfully announced -- "Conquer Chronic Fatigue: New Tests and Treatments." In fact, the article contained not one iota of information on new tests or treatments. It was, however, full of undocumented drug claims and wisdom spouted by obscure medical "experts" on the subject. The information was slanted to lure the poor victims of this syndrome to climb on the medical merry-go-round. The article was so misguiding that as I read it, I expected a huge Pinocchio nose to explode from the pages and hit me in the forehead. It's tragic that this biased article is likely to hook and reel unsuspecting, desperate sufferers into the offices of the very practitioners least likely to help them!

Near the conclusion, John Renner, M.D., warned people to be wary of several "bizarre treatments" -- hydrogen peroxide injections, homeopathic remedies, colonics, vitamin C, and other food supplements. He then said, "Until a cure is found, focus on safe, best-bet treatments." James Jones, M.D., then sprung forth and sang the praises of tricyclic antidepressants. These drugs are about as safe as a game of Russian roulette.<sup>5</sup> Not daunted by risks to patients, however, Dr. Jones claimed that with these drugs, he has relieved the symptoms of 70 percent of his patients with the condition -- a grandiose boast, credible as the hawking of a snake-oil salesman.

Consider this: In 1986, Robert Bennett, M.D., a recognized authority on this syndrome, said, "There is a growing consensus that, except for modulating sleep, current medications have little to offer in the management of fibrositis."<sup>6</sup> Also, in 1986, Frederick Wolfe, M.D., another acknowledged authority, made the following significant statement: "Of the pharmacotherapies, cyclobenziprene (Flexeril) was most effective, with 39 percent of patients reporting moderate to great relief. Taken as a whole, however, pharmacotherapies (including tricyclic antidepressants) were rated as ineffective by more than 45 percent of patients. Of interest is that rest and relaxation as well as other lifestyle modifications were most effective. Chiropractic treatment also rated among the most effective measures."<sup>7</sup> (Italics mine.)

Bennett and Wolfe are internationally recognized authorities on this condition. Renner and Jones, the "authorities" quoted in the Prevention article are, to my knowledge, thoroughly unknown in this clinical area. In researching the literature for my forthcoming textbook *Myofascial Therapy*, I've read virtually every paper published in this field. I've found nothing, however, that Drs. Renner and Jones have written on the subject.

Why did Prevention interview and quote Dr. Renner and Dr. Jones instead of recognized authorities? And why didn't Prevention report the effectiveness of chiropractic treatment compared to the ineffectiveness of drug therapy? Perhaps it's that these men say what Prevention needs them to say to reach its new objective -- as Mr. Petersen suggested, to slowly redefine health to fit the medical model. The slanted, misleading information contained in the article appeared to promote drug-marketing medics and the expensive, dangerous chemicals they pander to the public. The medical-pharmaceutical cartel has lost favor in the past decade, thanks to the heroic efforts of MDs such as Dr. Robert S. Mendelsohn and the tenacity of the chiropractic profession. It appears that to regain lost ground, the cartel has developed a new strategy of survival. We're witnessing it in the Trojan Horse of Prevention Magazine.

I want to repeat Mr. Petersen's advice: "---let Prevention Magazine know just how disgusting and insulting this is!

"Send a strong message to:

**Rodale Books**

**Attn: Mark Bricklin, Editor**

**Box 602**

**Emmaus, PA 18098**

Do it now. Do it for chiropractic!"

*References*

1. Petersen, Jr., D.M. "Chiropractors are '---not advised for the treatment of serious back disorders---' according to Prevention Magazine." *Dynamic Chiropractic* February 14, 1990; p 44.
2. Fuerst, M.L. "Free Yourself From Chronic Fatigue: what science has discovered about fighting back against this deep-down, dog-tired syndrome." *Prevention* January 1990; 42(1): 58-64
3. Lowe, J.C. "Globalization of Myofascial Pain Syndromes." *Dynamic Chiropractic* March 14, 1990; p 18.
4. Lowe, J.C. "Contributing factors," (side 6-7) *The Purpose and Practice of Myofascial Therapy*. Houston, McDowell Publishing Co. 1989.
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7. Wolfe, F. "The Clinical Syndrome of Fibrositis." *The American Journal of Medicine* September 19, 1986; 81(suppl 3A); p 13.

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