



March 2018 Newsletter

2511 Neudorf Road, Suite F, Clemmons NC 27012 336.778.1950 [www.IntegrativeLifeSolutions.com](http://www.IntegrativeLifeSolutions.com)

---

## THE PERFECT PHARMACEUTICAL

Most of us would think of the perfect pharmaceutical agent as one that is effective, inexpensive, and without significant side effects. It also should be non-addictive and easy to stop; once it is no longer needed. Oh, and it should fix the problem permanently, so it is no longer needed.

Pharmaceutical executives, however, might have a different take on what a perfect agent might be. It would certainly be expensive and only available from one manufacturer. It would treat a common problem, so that many patients would need to buy it. It might even be addictive, so that ever increasing doses would be necessary for the same effect. It probably wouldn't cure the condition it was prescribed to treat, but merely mask the symptoms. The perfect pharmaceutical might even create a situation in which the condition it treated would worsen if the agent was withdrawn. The common properties of these perfect agents amount to profit. Sell a lot, corner the market, and be sure that once people start on it, they probably will be on it for life. It might even create new problems so that patients need to buy a second, third or even a fourth drug!

Hmmm. Sounds a little like tobacco, doesn't it?

So, let's see if there really exists such a "perfect drug."

How about "Mother's Little Helper." You may be too young to recognize this term, but it was used to describe the first diazepam. Diazepines are a group of drugs (Valium, Xanax, Clonazepam, Ativan, etc.) that treat anxiety and insomnia. And in this high stress world, how many people don't occasionally have some anxiety or trouble sleeping?

Diazapines are addictive; if you take them for more than two weeks or so, you begin to need more drug for the same effect. The withdrawal symptoms are; guess what - anxiety and insomnia. So, when you stop taking them, you suddenly become aware of how much you need them. They become a part of your life. Diazapines also cause the Pineal gland to stop making melatonin, which is the natural sleep hormone, so you can't sleep without them.

So, are diazapines harmful? Recent research shows that if you take diazapines for more than three months, you have a risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. If you take them for more than 6 months, the increase is 75 percent! They also make you sedated, less likely to exercise, depressed, and lower your IQ score. This may lead to any number of additional pharmaceuticals like stimulants, antidepressants or cognitive enhancers. Diazapines do not treat the underlying cause of the problem and make behavioral psychotherapy much less effective! Why not treat the underlying cause, which may be suboptimal hormones, low-grade inflammation, inadequate nutrition, lack of exercise, or a stressful job or relationship? That approach requires more time and effort, and certainly wouldn't make a major profit for Big Pharma. But, the rewards may result in a healthier you!

How about antidepressants? Most everyone I know gets depressed, from time to time. So many people need antidepressants, right? Why do so many people who start an antidepressant, have a problem stopping it? Many antidepressants lower SAME, which is a natural feel good hormone. They alter the level of neurotransmitters in the brain; and lower the same chemicals in the gut, the heart, and all other tissues. The brain is actually very good at regulating the levels of neurotransmitters, so the brain will alter the level at which the transmitters are produced to neutralize the effect of the antidepressant. When many people try to stop the antidepressants, they become more depressed. Many antidepressants also cause weight gain, altered thinking patterns, and even suicide.

Antidepressants must be very effective, and supported by strong experimental evidence, to be used so much; right? Wrong. Antidepressants research shows a very mild positive effect compared to placebo. Regular exercise has a much stronger effect on mood! And depression is often secondary to hormone deficiency (20 percent of women over 60 take antidepressants) or nutritional deficits. Why not treat depression with nutrition, hormone optimization, and exercise?

Let's look at everybody's favorite bad boy, narcotics. Opioids are certainly effective for acute pain, everybody who has had a broken bone or a hernia repair knows that. But for chronic pain, not so much. Numerous research studies fail to show a decrease in pain, or an increase in function, from narcotics used for chronic pain. Yet, they have been prescribed in huge doses for decades. Opioids create hormone deficiency, addiction, sedation, and depression. They contribute to an unending cycle of decreased function, productivity loss and a nationwide epidemic of opioid addiction.

Pharmaceutical companies promoted expensive, long acting narcotics for chronic pain. They created a myth that pain was undertreated in this country. Big Pharma invented the slogan, "pain is the fifth vital sign." Although doctors and hospitals bought it, science

did not support the program. While Big Pharma profited billions; patients, their families and the fabric of our society suffered the consequences.

Many other examples of imperfect drugs, appearing “perfect,” from the corporate perspective include the following:

Follow the money.

1. Statins. They are great at lowering cholesterol, not so good at lengthening or improving life. The Harvard “Doctors Study” states that by lowering cholesterol by 40 points, risk of death increases hundreds of times over in the next decade. Statins decrease CoQ10 and B12. A renowned Japanese statin researcher published a paper titled, “Statins Simulate Arteriosclerosis Heart Failure.” Why are statins so dangerous in Japan, yet so essential in the U.S.?

2. Proton pump inhibitors (Omeprazole, Protonix, Nexium, etc.) decrease gastric acid production, cause hypertension, kidney failure, osteoporosis and Alzheimer’s disease significantly, but are very helpful in treating reflux. They also are mega billion-dollar drugs for Big Pharma.

3. Antibiotics are overprescribed, overused in humans and animals (recently, there were more antibiotics given to animals in North Carolina than to humans in the entire United States!). They are occasionally necessary, even lifesaving, but cause kidney problems and destroy your normal gut flora.

And the hits just keep on coming.

So, what should you do; avoid any pharmaceutical? Of course not. But ask your doctor the following questions, whenever a drug is prescribed:

1. How does this drug work to treat the problem?
2. What are the side effects?
3. Is there a natural alternative, including hormones, nutraceuticals, life-style and diet changes?
4. Is there an exit strategy?
5. Most importantly, do not take any pharmaceutical until you know it is the right decision and that the rewards outweigh the risks.

For more information on natural alternatives and disease prevention, contact Integrative Life Solutions, to ensure a long, healthy and productive life.

James T. Skeen, MD  
Integrative and Regenerative Health