



MCS America
MCS America

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Multiple Chemical Sensitivity



Beleaguered, Part 2

MCSA NEWS

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Multiple Chemical Sensitivity Beleaguered

**“Dollar signs
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Part 2

Last month a basic overview of the industry disinformation campaign against multiple chemical sensitivity was presented. This month continues to explore this issues in more depth.

As a fitting start to this months exploration, Mary Ebeling's *Beyond Advertising: The Pharmaceutical Industry's Hidden Marketing Tactics* was published on February 21st at PR Watch. In her article, Ebeling describes the marketing tactics engaged in by pharmaceutical companies to increase profits, including celebrity endorsements and specific communication targets for direct to consumer drug advertisements aimed at mothers of certain income.

Ebeling shares some startling statistics, including (Ebeling, 2008):

- The biggest 10 pharmaceutical companies spent \$1.9 billion on promotional events alone in 2000.
 - Pharmaceutical companies spend a whopping \$8,290 per doctor to improve their relationship between their sales representatives and the doctor.
 - The average family doctor receives 28 visits each week from drug representatives who provide free samples and ex-

plain new findings from their company-sponsored drug trials.

- Free events were held for doctors at posh resorts and expensive hotels to educate doctors about so-called new disease states, such as restless leg syndrome. Many of these diseases sates are manufactured to sell drugs.

Multiple chemical sensitivity (MCS) is every pharmaceutical companies worse nightmare because the effective treatments for MCS are avoidance of chemical incitants and various vitamin regimes, neither of which pharmaceutical companies can profit on. There are no known drugs that remedy MCS.

However, dollar signs danced in front of upper management when they manufactured a way to sell drugs to individuals with MCS. Thus, they set out to disprove that MCS is a real medical condition. If MCS is not real, then it's psychological and in comes their psycho-pharmaceutical drugs for treatment.

Ideal to pull off such a disinformation campaign are pharmaceutical companies that can afford to spend \$8,290 per doctor and billions on advertising each year. Unsuspecting doctors, patients, and the general public are viewed as easily duped into believing scientific studies report truthful findings. But do they?

“I can’t get funding to perform studies and it is difficult to get the studies published in medical literature.”

Have doctors taken the time to investigate who funds scientific studies? Remember that pharmaceutical company representatives arrive 28 times a week to chat with each doctor about new findings from “their” company-sponsored drug trials.

Science is supposed to be objective; however, no one questions the conflict of interest created by drug companies sponsoring their own drug trials. In addition, no one questions the fact that drug companies own a large majority of scientific journals. And if drug companies own the journals, is it any wonder why studies showing the benefits of vitamins and physiological basis of MCS are blocked from publication? This is the reason why studies showing harmful effects of drugs are rarely published. The bottom line is a huge conflict of interest.

Ann McCampbell, MD states “Drug companies, which usually work with the medical profession to try to help patients, are working to deny help for those with MCS” (McCampbell, 2001). The reason she gives is that many drug companies are intimately connected to the chemical industry,

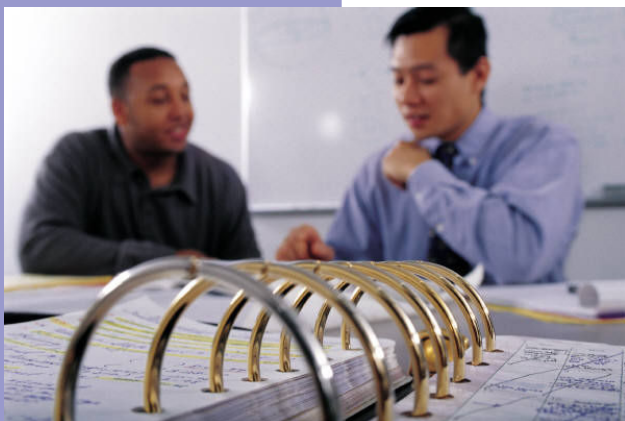
which also has vested financial interest in proving MCS is not real.

The chemical industry makes the very products that make people with MCS sick!

McCampbell (2001) cites 1996 legislation that would have provided funding for a prevalence study, an information and assistance program, an “800” telephone number, hospital accommodation guidelines, and an investigation of housing needs of people with MCS. The legislation was opposed by a Ciba-Geigy (now Novartis) lobbyist who declared that MCS has no physical origin. The company is a pharmaceutical company which also manufactures atrazine, an herbicide, and diazinon, an organophosphate pesticide, doubling their vested interest in suppressing the truth about MCS. Remember these companies own scientific journals and therefore control what is published, so truthful MCS research is often denied publication.

When asked why she stopped researching MCS, a researcher revealed, “I can’t get funding to perform studies and it is difficult to get the studies published in medical literature.” Yes there is plenty of money and space for publishing industry supported studies that attempt to disprove MCS. However, when one looks objectively at these studies, the underlying premise is that if “x” does not cause MCS, it’s psychological. Yet, “y” and “z” are never ruled out.

Tactics often include claiming MCS is caused by depression or anxiety, conditions that legitimate research has shown are no more prevalent in MCS than in any other chronic disease process, including diabetes and cancer.



“Sandoz stood to benefit from pesticides being exonerated as the cause of MCS.”



McC Campbell (2001) provides additional evidence of the close ties between the chemical and pharmaceutical industry:

- The pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly used to be a part of DowE-lanco, the primary manufacturer of chlorpyrifos.
- The manufacturer of the allergy medicine Allegra also makes the insecticide Sevin.
- Monsanto, who manufactures Roundup and other herbicides, is a wholly owned subsidiary of a pharmaceutical company called Pharmacia.
- Zeneca manufactures pesticides and drugs, including drugs used to treat the conditions linked to pesticides.
- Pfizer and Abbott Laboratories make both pharmaceuticals and pesticides.
- BASF makes pharmaceutical ingredients and pesticides.
- Bayer manufactures aspirin and the pyrethroid insecticide Tempo.
- Many pharmaceutical companies are members of the American Chemical Council (formerly the Chemical Manufacturers Association).

In addition to controlling what science is published in journals based on findings to support their financial interests, the pharmaceutical industry also influences medical conferences and organizations through funding and corporate sponsorship. By limiting accurate information on MCS at conferences and journals, the pharmaceutical industry has left doctors

ill-equipped to treat patients with MCS.

“One example of the pharmaceutical industry’s direct attempt to present anti-MCS information at a medical conference was at the 1990 meeting of the American College of Allergy and Immunology. Sandoz (now Novartis) was scheduled to sponsor a one day workshop that characterized people with MCS as mentally ill. This company was a large manufacturer of pesticides and pharmaceuticals, including anti-psychotic, anti-depressant, and sedative medications. Therefore, Sandoz stood to benefit both from pesticides being exonerated as the cause of MCS and from people with MCS being treated with psychiatric drugs. As it turned out, people with MCS outraged by the workshop risked their health to protest the event and were able to shut it down” (McC Campbell, 2001).

Unfortunately for those with MCS, psychiatric drugs are not effective and can cause more damage. Drugs are a chemical and are intolerable for many with MCS. In excess of 80% of MCS patients report no benefit from psychotherapy to cure MCS and 15% have reported further harm (Gibson et al, 2003). Psychiatric drugs such as Zoloft, Prozac, Elavil, and other antidepressants are reported to harm an average of 60% of those who tried them and had no effect on an additional 25% (Gibson et al, 2003). Drugs such as Valium and Xanax proved to harm 45% and had no effect on an additional 30% (Gibson et al, 2003).

“The tactics engaged in by the pharmaceutical industry are unconscionable.”

The tactics engaged in by the pharmaceutical industry are unconscionable. People’s lives are forever changed by MCS. The unscrupulous tactics engaged in by the pharmaceutical industry have caused people with MCS to be denied appropriate health care. If that’s not enough, employment is limited, disability is difficult to obtain, and housing is extremely challenging. People who could be treated and have otherwise normal, productive lives have been robbed of such normalcy.

But perhaps the worst aspect is the way people with MCS are treated. They suffer loss of dignity, respect, and credibility at the hands of industry disinformation. Often dismissed by doctors and treated with hostility by co-workers, family, and friends, the already small world of those with MCS becomes even smaller. Some become so sick that they cannot live in normal housing.



Pamela Reed Gibson says, “Housing may be the single most crucial element in survival and possible improvement for someone with MCS. Yet it is almost impossible for people with MCS to find places to live that are truly safe for them. I believe that MCS is an important and unrecognized contributor to homelessness. As people disappear

from a visible lifestyle and adopt coping mechanisms such as living on porches and in RVs, they approach the divide between those with and without homes. When they slide over that divide there is no record of it and they disappear” (Gibson, 2005).

While politicians attempt to end homelessness, industry disinformation is adding to homelessness and dependence on social services at the cost of taxpayers.

Tune in next month for details on how the chemical industry has contributed to this disinformation campaign.

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