



ADVANCED BODY DYNAMICS

Wellness Care & Sports Medicine

CONTAMINATED DRUG SALES AND COVER-UP TAINTS AN INDUSTRY AND ITS “WATCHDOG”

It's a cover-up that happened almost 25 years ago, but it's the thinking behind it and the ramifications of official actions at the time that still pervade the pharmaceutical industry today. Unfortunately, the organization that is supposed to protect Americans as well as other peoples of the world from injustices and harmful products at the hands of the drug-producing giants is apparently fully immersed in the scandal.

In the early 1980s, Bayer Corporation was involved in the production of Factor VIII, a drug that was used to treat hemophiliacs (a medical condition where the body has an inability to clot blood causing severe bleeding from even a minor injury), mostly children. Unfortunately, a large batch of this drug was contaminated by the HIV virus and was known to be tainted. These facts become widely known in the United States.

Seeing that their large investment in this drug was potentially going to be lost, Bayer officials came up with a solution. They sent this tainted product overseas to be marketed in countries where the news of Factor VIII contamination had not yet spread. These areas included Spain and France in Europe, several countries in South America, as well as Japan.

Just as had occurred when the drug was in use in the United States, children in these countries began to develop the symptoms of HIV. In Hong Kong and Taiwan alone, it is estimated that over one hundred hemophiliacs contracted HIV after using the tainted medicine.

The problem with the drug came about when Bayer produced the drug-clotting medication using unheated blood concentrates. The drug is made by combining large stocks of blood plasmas collected from many donors. When some HIV tainted blood was included in the mix, the entire large batch was contaminated. After this was discovered, new stocks were subsequently made with heat-treated blood to eliminate the HIV threat.

That's when the question of what to do with the entire tainted batch was addressed, and this is when the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) got into the act. In a report of the story brought to light by the *New York Times*, it's alleged that our own FDA officials recommended marketing the initial batch to countries that included Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Argentina. In that manner, the company could still reap profits from sales even though Factor VII was pulled from the US market.

Despite the fact that at least two officials in France were subsequently sent to jail for approving the controversial drug in their country, the whole matter was kept under wraps in the US. Here, neither the FDA nor Bayer were subject to any investigation or indictment. The whole situation was handled quietly without alerting Congress, the medical community or the public. Of course, Bayer to this day maintains that the company behaved in a responsible and ethical manner.

For further information on this, take a look at a MSNBC video report on this incident entitled “Pharmaceutical Ethics: Protected by the White House, FDA and Congress,” and you can also visit: <http://www.brasschecktv.com/page/377.html>. It's a bit of an eye-opener!

Source: The Institute of Science in Society. “FDA in Third World Drug Trial Scandals. HIV Drug Dumped on Developing Countries.” January 2006. <http://www.i-sis.org.uk:80/FDAinDrugTrial.php>