

Quackwatch review - Is Stephen Barrett a Quack? Is he fair, balanced, or biased, by [Ray Sahelian, M.D.](#) - Quackwatch sends an email to Dr. Sahelian

Over the years I have had many people ask my opinion regarding Stephen Barrett and Quackwatch, but I have been reserved in voicing my thoughts. However, in March 2006 we received an email from someone who claimed that Stephen Barrett had told him negative things about a product I had formulated. Then, in June, 2006 my staff received an email from Stephen Barrett (see below). This prompted us to create a page regarding Quackwatch.org in order to present our point of view. According to the Quackwatch website, this is what Stephen Barrett, M.D. says about himself.

"Stephen Barrett, M.D., a retired psychiatrist who resides in Allentown, Pennsylvania, has achieved national renown as an author, editor, and consumer advocate. In addition to heading Quackwatch, he is vice-president of the National Council Against Health Fraud, a scientific advisor to the American Council on Science and Health, and a Fellow of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP)."

Is Dr. Stephen Barrett fair in his analysis of nutrition research and those involved in the nutrition industry?

I have not read every single page on Quackwatch but the ones I read give me the impression that in many cases he has done good research on many of the people involved in the alternative health industry, and has pointed out several instances of inaccuracies and scams (for instance, Hulda Clark and her pitiful book "The Cure for all Cancers"). However, I hardly came across reports on his website regarding some of the scams or inaccurate promotion and marketing practices by the pharmaceutical industry. Why is this? Why has Stephen Barrett, M.D. focused almost all of his attention on the nutritional industry and has hardly spent time pointing out the billions of dollars wasted each year by consumers on certain prescription and non-prescription pharmaceutical drugs? If he truly claims to be a true consumer advocate, isn't it his responsibility to make sure the big scams are addressed first before focusing on the smaller scams? It's like the government putting all of its efforts going after the poor misusing food stamps while certain big companies cheat billions of dollars from consumers with hardly any governmental oversight.

Why is there no review of Vioxx on Quackwatch? Why is there no mention on quackwatch.org of the worthless cold and cough medicines sold by pharmaceutical companies and drug stores? Hundreds of millions of dollars are wasted each year by consumers on these worthless and potentially harmful decongestants and cough syrups. Why is there no mention on quackwatch of the dangers of acetaminophen use, including liver damage? There are probably more people who are injured or die from over the counter Tylenol and aspirin use each year than from all the natural supplements people take throughout a year. If Dr. Barrett had focused his career on educating people in reducing the use of useless and dangerous prescription and nonprescription drugs (even just one, acetaminophen) he would have helped many more people than attempting to scare people from the use of supplements.

Another point I would like to make regarding Quackwatch is that Dr. Barrett often, if not the majority of the time, seems to point out the negative outcome of studies with

supplements (you can sense his glee and relish when he points out these negative outcomes), and rarely mentions the benefits they provide. A true scientist takes a fair approach, and I don't see this in my review of the Quackwatch website. I subscribe to the Quackwatch newsletter (which often has interesting information) but there is hardly any mention of the benefits of supplements. As an example, see a paragraph from the August, 2006 Quackwatch newsletter mentioned a few paragraphs below.

Bottom line: Overall, Dr. Barrett does some good in pointing out scams in the alternative health field, but, in my opinion, he is not fair and balanced, and he is not a true objective scientist as he claims to be. Someone who has a website specifically tailored for criticism needs to have a higher and more objective scientific standard, and Barrett fails in this regard.

Could Stephen Barrett, M.D. post his thoughts on Quackwatch regarding these two topics:

The first is on the billions of dollars spent on worthless and dangerous Alzheimer's drugs as noted in The New York Times: "Alzheimer's Drugs Offer No Help, Study Finds" By Benedict Carey, October 12, 2006. The article begins, "The drugs most commonly used to soothe agitation and aggression in people with Alzheimer's disease are no more effective than placebos for most patients, and put them at risk of serious side effects, including confusion, sleepiness and Parkinson's disease-like symptoms."

The second is on drug company charlatanism by Robert Bazell, a medical correspondent for NBC. <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/14348176/>

Am I, Ray Sahelian, M.D., perfectly fair in my review of supplement research? I try to be, but this is a very difficult task. I cannot be fully objective and I don't believe anyone can be. It is well known in psychology that people perceive things according to how they want to see them. We all approach scientific research results with our own bias and interpretation (even actual researchers have their bias or may be influenced by vested interests). But the difference between me and Dr. Barrett is that I don't have a website that primarily focuses on bashing other people or bashing a particular and important aspect of the health industry, such as the nutritional field which holds enormous promise in health and medicine and has long been ignored, and its potential barely tapped.

Apparently Stephen Barrett is a retired psychiatrist. Does he take any supplements himself to learn firsthand how they work? Does he treat patients with nutritional supplements in order to get an insight how these herbs and nutrients influence the body? Anyone who comments about supplements and has not taken them, or has not had feedback for several years from hundreds or thousands of patients, does not have a full understanding of how they work or what benefit or side effects they have. Their opinion cannot be fully relied on, no matter how many articles they have read regarding the effect of these supplements on rodents or in vitro lab studies.

Quackwatch sends a query to Dr. Sahelian

In June, 2006, my staff informed me that we received an email from Quackwatch. These were the exact words in the email:

"What is your relationship with Physician Formulas? Are you the owner, an owner, a consultant, an employee, or what?"

Stephen Barrett, M.D.
Board Chairman, Quackwatch, Inc.
NCAHF Vice President and Director of Internet Operations
P.O. Box 1747, Allentown, PA 18105
Telephone: (610) 437-1795

Dr. Sahelian says: We did not feel the need to respond to Stephen Barrett, M.D. It is quite presumptuous of him to probe in this manner, plus I felt it was a rude way of asking. There was no polite introduction such as "Dr. Sahelian, I hope you are well, would you mind if I ask you a personal question" or ending the request with something like "thanks for your time," or 'sincerely' etc. Ending the email with "or what?" is extremely impolite and shows lack of manners and sensitivity. Didn't Stephen Barrett's mother, father, or schoolteacher teach him the proper way to address a letter? If he had addressed the letter politely, I would have asked my staff to respond to him.

I write a newsletter for Physician Formulas and formulate products and review new research on vitamins and herbs. Why is my role with www.PhysicianFormulas.com any of the business of Dr. Stephen Barrett of Quackwatch? What if someone emailed Stephen Barrett and asked him to report personal information such as an itemized list of his sources of income? Where does Quackwatch get funding, anyway? Quackwatch has been involved in a number of lawsuits and apparently Stephen Barrett had lost one or more lawsuits where the judge made him pay the opposing attorneys fees. Where does he get his funding? He is a retired psychiatrist, how can he afford getting involved in so many lawsuits and pay all the legal bills?

I felt his approach by the above email was abrupt and not appropriate and indicates a great deal about the actual personality of the man. If Stephen Barrett does read this, I hope he realizes the rudeness of his email. I would appreciate a letter of apology.

Email received in March 2006

Q. Hi, I was told by Dr. Stephen Barrett, M.D. from Quackwatch that Passion Rx is not safe. Why would he say that?

A. Passion Rx is a sexual enhancement product comprised of several herbs. No herb or herbal product, including garlic, is completely safe -- just as no medicine is completely safe. However, when used properly, herbs are generally safer than drugs. If someone has sexual dysfunction, they are often willing to take the risk of taking a pill in order to improve their condition even if it has some side effects. Passion Rx has much fewer side effects than pharmaceutical drugs. If Stephen Barrett, M.D. believes Passion Rx is not safe, he should present such evidence. If he believes Viagra is safer than Passion Rx, he should present such evidence. We doubt he has gone through the effort of doing a double blind, placebo-controlled study comparing the two. If he recommends people take Viagra, with the possibility, albeit uncommon, of complete vision loss or a serious heart problem, then that is his choice. You have the option to follow Dr. Barrett's advice, or perhaps consider the fact that his

understanding of herbal medicine, and clinical experience in nutritional medicine, is quite limited. Your choice.

Stephen Barrett is probably not aware that Passion Rx, in addition to enhancing erectile function, improves genital sensation and increases libido. Viagra only works for erectile dysfunction and has no effect on genital sensation and little or no effect on libido. The advantage of Viagra is that it works quickly, within a few hours whereas Passion Rx takes a few days for maximal effect.

From Quackwatch Newsletter, August, 2006

Pancreatitis associated with saw palmetto use - The Southern Medical Journal has reported a case of a 55-year-old man who developed acute hepatitis and pancreatitis in response to taking saw palmetto for benign prostatic enlargement. The patient improved after he stopped taking the herb, [Jibrin I and others. Saw palmetto-induced pancreatitis. Southern Medical Journal 99: 611-612, 2006]

Dr. Sahelian says: There was no mention of a positive study on another supplement in this Stephen Barrett newsletter, only one negative case report which may or may not be accurate. The patient could have been taking other medicines or supplements and failed to inform his doctor, or drinking a lot of alcohol, or something else could have caused the problem. Even if true, Stephen Barrett could have included in the same newsletter a report of a side effect from a drug, and there are plenty of those to choose from. Saw palmetto has been used for decades and this is the first case report of pancreatitis associated with it. Yet, Stephen Barrett believed it was important enough to mention it in his newsletter. This clearly indicates that Quackwatch looks out for negative outcomes on supplements as opposed to balancing the newsletter with a positive outcome on herbal research, or mentioning negative studies or side effects from drugs. An unbiased scientist is balanced. It is my opinion that Stephen Barrett, M.D. is significantly biased and cannot be considered a true scientist.

A saw palmetto study with 225 men did not reveal any significant side effects from saw palmetto supplements when given for one year. See [saw palmetto](#) for details. Yet, as of August 2008, Stephen Barrett, M.D., of Quackwatch, has not yet mentioned this study in his newsletter.

Is Stephen Barrett, M.D. a Quack?

According to the Quackwatch website, Stephen Barrett, M.D. says this about quackery: Dictionaries define quack as "a pretender to medical skill; a charlatan" and "one who talks pretentiously without sound knowledge of the subject discussed."

Stephen Barrett, M.D. does not have a degree in nutrition science. He has been trained in psychiatry but has not practiced psychiatry for many, many years and has, to the best of my understanding, never practiced nutritional medicine. In my opinion, Stephen Barrett, M.D., when it comes to the field of medicinal use of nutritional supplements, can be easily defined as a Quack since he pretends to "have skills or knowledge in supplements and talks pretentiously" without actually having clinical expertise or sound knowledge of herbal and nutritional medicine.

A person can't be an expert at a topic if they have not had hands-on experience. Would you feel comfortable having heart surgery by a doctor who has read all the medical books on how to surgically replace a heart valve but has never performed an

actual surgical procedure in an operating room? Would you feel comfortable relying on nutritional advice from a retired psychiatrist, Stephen Barrett, M.D. of Quackwatch, even though he has not had hands-on experience using supplements with patients and does not have a degree in nutrition science?

On a positive note, Stephen Barrett, M.D. often does a good job when it comes to researching credentials of individuals in the nutritional industry, or researching the legitimacy or marketing practices of certain supplement companies. He has uncovered or brought to light several cases of companies that have shady or fraudulent practices. I suggest he stay on this course (which is his forte) rather than giving his uneducated opinion on nutritional medicine or supplement research. I also hope he becomes more balanced in his reviews and makes the effort to also mention positive outcomes regarding supplement research, and not just negative outcomes.

Stephen Barrett, M.D. and Quackwatch lose legal battle and ordered to pay defendant's attorneys' fees

December 2007 - After a 6-year legal battle, a California judge ordered Stephen Barrett, M.D. to pay the legal fees of a defendant who, although she has posted negative statements about him, was not held accountable due to a technicality. In an effort to protect Web hosting companies from what is posted on their clients' Web sites, the US Congress put into legislation language that the courts have interpreted as protecting individuals from suits if they don't originate the alleged libels.

Emails

I am a PhD currently in the military (Navy) and just wanted to let you know that I read your online editorial regarding quackwatch. I couldn't agree with you more regarding the ignorance and pretentiousness of Stephen Barrett regarding alternative medicine, and nutritional supplements in particular. I wish you the best in your practice.

A. Thank you. Dr. Stephen Barrett appears to have an unreasonably strong dislike, almost a hatred, of natural supplements, and one wonders what motivates a person to have such feelings and to be so biased. We understand that there is a certain amount of fraud and consumer misleading in the natural healing field, but there is also such fraud in the drug industry and Stephen Barrett hardly says anything negative about the pharmaceutical industry.

I finally found someone else who feels that Stephen Barrett is a quack in his own right.

Dear Sir, I am writing regarding the hypocrisy that is being perpetrated by those who hold themselves out to be all knowing in fields with which they have no clinical experience or practice. It is more than obvious that this retired Dr. Stephen Barrett of Quackwatch has close ties to the government, the pharmaceutical industry, and otherwise the monopoly that exists in this country that chooses to deceive the American populace in the interest of furthering their own graft, greed and corruption. I commend you on your work and am a long time follower. I want to say in closing it is doctors like you that help me maintain my faith in medicine. As for the rest maybe in time they will open their eyes and minds once their pocketbooks are filled with money.

Thank you for you review of Quackwatch and Mr. Stephen Barrett. Most of the

questions you have posted I have wondered as well. Further, I have been unable to verify the claim that Stephen Barrett himself is a quack, but have found several articles, such as this http://www.foundationforhealthchoice.com/victory_barett.html, that do make such a claim. I am somewhat defensive toward anyone who seems to take the position that all "alternative medicines" are scams after my wife barely survived the abuse of the AMA's "traditional medicine" and was healed with the help of natural supplements. I also find it funny that modern medicine has managed to steal the label of "traditional" for themselves and pinned "alternative" on that which, at least in some cases, dates back to biblical times.

Q. First of all I would like to commend you on your open minded approach to nutrition and alternate health care. There is a lot of good in people that choose to look at things as open mindedly as humanly possible. I am a nursing student in Virginia, and am doing some independent research on reflexology. A friend of mine gave me Dr. Stephen Barrett's web site as a source for some writing against this subject. When i "googled" QuackWatch, Google also found your site in the search. I am not writing to "land blast" you or to tear down what you said about Dr. Stephen Barrett. I have no connection with Dr. Steohen Barrett or you. In fact i had not heard of either one of you until this very day. I would instead like to point out on a comment you made in your article. You said and I quote: "But the difference between me and Dr. Stephen Barrett is that I don't have a website that primarily focuses on bashing other people or bashing a particular and important aspect of the health industry, such as the nutritional field which holds enormous promise in health and medicine and has long been ignored, and its potential barely tapped." The part of this that i wish to challenge you on is the statement about the difference between you and Dr. Stephen Barrett. I wish to say only that you do in fact have a website primarily to bash someone, Dr. Stephen Barrett. I also agree that someone needs to start some reviews and critiques on the pharmaceutical industries. Maybe, since you seem to see it so clearly, you should start a website researching the poor practices of our government and the pharmaceutical companies.

A. Thank you for your email. There are more than 1600 pages on my website and only one of them has to do with Stephen Barrett and Quackwatch. Perhaps you did not realize this or did not have the time to look at the index on the home page. My website was not created with the intent to bash other people, but to provide nutritional research information by a medical doctor. The majority of the pages on Quackwatch have to do with criticizing someone in the health field or a particular form on natural health. Granted, I do not dispute many of the charges that Quackwatch makes regarding the lack of research to support certain forms of natural medicine. I also tend to agree with his evaluation of certain bogus healing or diagnostic methods. I have a major issue with his interpretation of supplement research. Stephen Barrett fails to balance criticisms with positive research on nutritional medicine. Subscribe to the Quackwatch newsletter and you will realize after a few issues that little or nothing is ever mentioned about the benefits of supplements or nutritional approaches to disease prevention or treatment. He likes to choose and review studies that show no benefit from supplements, and by virtue of excluding positive outcomes from his website or newsletter, one gets the impression that supplements don't really work. This, in my opinion, is a disservice to the public.

My website constantly gets feedback from readers thanking me about providing honest and up to date nutritional information. This type of information from a medical doctor with a nutrition background is not readily prevalent. Most doctors in this country are not aware that safe and effective nutritional options are available to treat or prevent a number of diseases. What is sad about the Quackwatch web site is that Stephen Barrett hardly mentions the benefits of natural approaches. As such, the public should be aware that, in my opinion, this doctor's viewpoints on natural medicine are not fair, nor are they balanced. Many people stumble upon the Quackwatch website and think that what is written there is from a doctor who is knowledgeable about the field of clinical nutrition and nutritional medicine. In my opinion he does not have adequate knowledge or experience in this area and the public should be aware of this fact.

I would like to have a review site on the pharmaceutical industry but I hardly have enough time to keep up with the advancing field of nutritional medicine. The pharmaceutical industry has created and marketed great products (vaccines, antibiotics, anesthetics for surgery, etc) that have helped countless people. But, they have also promoted products that have hurt people (Vioxx) and pushed products that are expensive and full of side effects where natural alternatives exist (statin drugs versus natural alternatives).

I challenge anyone to provide me with strong evidence that Dr. Stephen Barrett is experienced in the clinical practice of nutritional medicine. If he does not have such experience, he should not pretend that he is an expert on this topic or that his views are superior to those he bashes.

Q. As a subscriber to Dr. Sahelian's newsletters, I was intrigued when I came across his name, vis-a-vis the Sahelian - Barrett correspondence. I was doing some trawling of the net regarding Krill (no pun intended) when I chanced upon their interchange of disparate opinions. Newton's 3rd law of motion states that "for every force there is an equal and opposite force." Dr.Sahelian or Dr.Barrett? As Shakespeare said, "Aye, there's the rub." After reading all the correspondence, I feel that in boxing terms, it's a "technical knock-out" for Dr. Sahelian. Dr. Sahelien is a supposed guardian of medical ethics. Dr. Barrett is also a supposed guardian of medical ethics. This poses that perennially fascinating question of. "Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?" During the course of my trawl, I came across the following observation by one of the contributors to the Sahelian - Barrett debate. I think the contributor's comment is well-worth recording. "I also find it funny that modern medicine has managed to steal the label of "traditional" for themselves and pinned "alternative" on that which, at least in some cases, dates back to biblical times." I think that's a very profound statement.

A. Quis custodiet ipsos custodes? is attributed to the Roman poet Juvenal. It is translated as "Who guards the guards?" or "Who watches the watchmen?" I think it is time someone knowledgeable in the nutritional field watched Quackwatch.

My wife has been going to a MD who subscribes to the Nutri-Spec Testing method for proper nutrition. I am unable to find good information on its validity. She has been on the system for about 8 months and her "numbers" have not changed. I am skeptical that a urine and saliva test in the office can adequately determine what one is lacking in nutrition. And of course they sell their own vitamins. Would appreciate any feedback.

I was wondering if u know anything about metabolic typing and whether or not u give credence to this type of evaluation. I'm working with a chiropractor who seems to know very much about health and nutrition and recommends the Nutri-Spec protocols. Upon reading an article by Stephen Barrett, M.D. criticizing the Nutri-Spec diet and calling it psuedoscience. I was wondering if u could clarify some things regarding the aforementioned practices, assuming you're familiar with them, i.e., metabolic typing and the follow up treatments. i read some things about Stephen Barrett and am taking them with a grain of salt. it's very hard to find out what regimen is right considering all the info that's out there. so many "so called experts" are extolling this or that treatment as the answer to one's health issues. I really don't know who to listen to and what path to go down!? is there not a data base from which i can find the correct info from real scientific experts that aren't biased to their findings, i.e., not affiliated with any one company. you know peer reviewed journals!? I would greatly appreciate your comments, because I'm sick of wasting money on quacks who say their way is the right way. thanks doc.

On the issue of Nutri-Spec testing, I agree with the review by Stephen Barrett, M.D. on the Quackwatch website (as of Feb 2008). In my opinion, the Nutri-Spec testing is not a reliable way to determine what supplements a person needs.

I am a chiropractor and wanted to take a moment to thank you for your excellent summary of the "work" of Stephen Barrett, MD. My profession has a lot to offer, but we also need to accept the critical thinking that is required to improve our abilities to serve the public. That being said, I am also suspicious of anyone whose claim to fame is attempting to destroy others while ignoring his own profession. Your web site is just about the best I have seen in terms of comprehensive information on the nutritional issues that the public faces on a daily basis. I, too, am suspicious of Nutri-Spec testing.

Q, My friend just sent me a link to your article about Dr: Stephen Barrett and Quackwatch. I couldn't believe some of his claims! I am a massage therapist and know he is wrong not only from personal experience, but from scientific findings! I'm sorry some people will believe what he writes because of his title as a doctor.

Q. Thank you for your information about the Quackwatch website. I was dismayed when I stumbled into his site and read his quack designation for muscle testing. I was diagnosed with collagenous colitis and bacterial overgrowth. The medical doctors were able to give me this diagnosis but said it had no known cause or cure. I went to a kinesiologist and an acupuncturist - both used muscle testing. They gave me supplements (and acupuncture) and directed me to information about what I could and could not eat. I'd been hopelessly ill for four months and had lost 20 pound, was weak and directionless. As soon as I started on the supplements and remedies I started improving and in four weeks I see few signs of my illness.

A. I actually agree with Stephen Barrett, M.D. and the information on the Quackwatch page regarding applied kinesiology. Quackwatch website describes it as "Applied kinesiology proponents claim that nutritional deficiencies, allergies, and other adverse reactions to foods or nutrients can be detected by having the patient chew or suck on these items or by placing them on the tongue so that the patient salivates. Some practitioners advise that the test material merely be held in the patient's hand or

placed on another part of the body." Stephen Barrett, M.D., concludes, "The concepts of applied kinesiology do not conform to scientific facts about the causes or treatment of disease. Controlled studies have found no difference between the results with test substances and with placebos. Differences from one test to another may be due to suggestibility, distraction, variations in the amount of force or leverage involved, and/or muscle fatigue."

I agree. Although I do not doubt the supplements and acupuncture treatment helped you, I seriously doubt it had anything to do with the applied kinesiology muscle testing.

Q. I am a 30 year old police officer who was injured at work by a Taser. It threw my back out. I have since gotten sick, and have been sick for 2 years. I have dizziness, shortness of breath, weakness, fatigue, weight loss etc. I also found my sugars were unstable, and my hormones such a cortisol, testosterone, and DHEA, were completely low. My adrenals were in a severe state of fatigue and under producing. I have been seeing a chiropractor that uses a combination of muscle testing, holistic medicine with supplements, and adjustments. I was wondering if you had an opinion on muscle testing and this type of practice. I have heard a lot of positive things from people, and they say it helped them. I have seen reports saying muscle testing is not reliable. I have also seen reports showing them being very accurate. I don't believe anything from Quackwatch because they have a typical negative Mainstream view point.

A. I do not find muscle testing to be a reliable form of diagnosis but I am a proponent of natural healing and supplements. The Quackwatch website has some reliable information and also some very biased opinions and interpretation of studies. However no one is fully objective, including me.

Q. The following article supports your argument: "There are more people who die and are injured from Tylenol use each year than there probably have been in the last decade or more of supplement use." Comment Regarding Statistics: At the under-reported estimate of 100,000 people who die each year as a direct result of prescription drugs, in comparison to the total number of 10 people reported to have died as a result of a nutritional product in the 23 years from 1983-2007; the resulting comparison equals a minimum 2,300,000 deaths from drugs versus 10 deaths from vitamins over the same period.

VITAMINS VERSUS DRUGS SAFETY AND EFFECTIVENESS by Dr. Andrew W. Saul. "More than 1.5 million Americans are injured every year by drug errors in hospitals, nursing homes and doctor's offices, a count that doesn't even estimate patients' own medication mix-ups. On average, a hospitalized patient is subject to at least one medication error per day. More than 100,000 patients annually die, just in the USA, from drugs properly prescribed and taken as directed. On the other hand, a review of poison control center reports reveals that vitamins have been connected with the deaths of a total of ten people in the United States over the last twenty-three years."

A. Thanks for sending this. The medical profession, the media, and the FDA make a big deal anytime there are adverse events associated with supplement use, but fail to put it in perspective in regards to prescription medication dangers.

I recently came across you from a web page of yours about QuackWatch and glad to see you are putting Dr. Barret in his place.

Let me say that I am very sorry that Dr. Sahelian has been attacked by the doctor from Quack Watch. As Dr. Sahelian aptly pointed out while there is a need for an individual or group to watch out for those who prey upon the gullible and take advantage or market stuff that is of little benefit or inferior quality, there are also those who are easily threatened by people with knowledge and good intentions truly who want to help people avoid the adverse effects of drugs that are often dangerous and or of little benefit. I recently read a very positive statement by a Dr. Minocha sp? who spoke very highly of Dr. Sahelian's book Mind Booster and of his work in general. Thank goodness that there are allopathic doctors who are willing to go on record in support of people like Dr. Sahelian. Thank you for your research and your continued efforts to explore the many benefits of alternative and complimentary medicine. Allopathic medicine has its value but we can't afford to ignore the myriad of natural and often far safer solutions and substances that are available to us.

I appreciate the bit you had on Dr. Stephen M. Barrett. I wasn't feeling too great and reading an article he wrote that mentioned herbs in relation to "Pro Quackery legislation" and generally saying they are not based on science, in a search for an herbalist in my area sort of dashed my hopes about the possibility of an herbal / alternative medicine for my A.D.D. and anxiety (so far 0/3 for medications to treat both or one without significant side effects). I guess I get swayed too easily in arenas I'm uninformed / inexperienced with and my A.D.D. and anxiety sure don't help me being able to stay focused, so reading in-depth about herbs at this time with school (more anxiety, less energy / time) will probably prove to be difficult but I am going to keep looking into it. It's sad that in this search: "do health insurance companies include herbalists?" His article came up near the top on google--perhaps I need to fine tune my searching skills. I was quite sure they are not really covered by insurance companies, but either way, I think they're worth looking into. I'm just not working so money is tight.

I just wanted to state that I appreciate what you've written about Stephen Barrett and his quackwatch website. I happen to know personally that he does not do his research. I am the formulator for NutriPlex Formulas and ended up on his dubious website when he erroneously and without reason to publish, stated that a certain person writes a newsletter for NutriPlex and that person is in essence a quack. Barrett never called us or performed any due diligence regarding this libel. I applaud you for standing up to him. His website, while sometimes helpful, is mostly a witch hunt and always, as you indicated, without fairness in regard to the damage done by modern medical modalities and prescription drug iatrogenic results.

The rebuttal to Quackwatch.org is well justified. I myself have used supplements (with breaks) like Omega-3 and other herbal products and seen the difference in my functioning. Although not all supplements have helped me, many did and i stick to the one's that did especially those that have scientific studies mentioned on your site. And moreover the products you have formulated don't contain high doses of herbs, vitamins like other companies sell which i have used in the past and suffered from

insomnia, oversimulation. I have taken Antidepressants prescribed by my doctor and although they were needed by me initially they did cause a number of disturbing side effects in the long term which are hardly even known by doctors themselves and hidden by Pharma companies. I think Stephen Barret is not likely to focus his attention as much of the dark side of these drugs. Today , fortunately the Dose of my Drug has been minimized under the supervision of my doctor, and in addition taking Omega-3 and 2 other supplements which have kept me more healthy than before.

I read with great interest your web rebuttal of Dr Barrett's quackery site. I must say it was very neutral in approach, bearing in mind the whole subject being a criticism of Dr Stephen Barrett. The conclusion that he is indeed a quack in definition, I must agree, as his MD is in psychiatry, a subjective discipline at best. I also agree with the criticism of pharmaceutical companies promoting the use of dangerous drugs. They have even managed to squirm their way out of being sued for making wrongful claims. They don't need a web site to promote their billion dollar scams, they just need corrupt or misinformed governments to dupe a very naïve public. Maybe this information should be made public?

I am a PhD from Tokyo, Japan and delighted to discover that someone is making cogent critiques of Stephen Barrett's biased writings. His approach, as you correctly said, is hardly scientific. His comments on various treatments such as Chinese medicine show not a careful probing evaluation based on accurate data but rather ignorance. One example is his constant attack on Andrew Weil, an attack that seems motivated more by jealousy than any thing else. Can correct breathing done regularly be helpful? I certainly think so. Can it cure cancer? Of course not and I do not know any sane person who makes that claim yet that is how Barrett ridicules breathing practices. Let me hasten to add that I have no medical qualifications but am a careful researcher in art history so I know what is careful research. I know but apparently Barrett does not. Thank you for your criticisms and I do hope they reach a wide audience.

I just came across your response to Quackwatch and feel a certain relief that another M.D. is confronting his "research." I have three general questions: I would like to know the efficacy of hair testing to determine heavy metal levels in the body. The validity of urine pH levels to determine acidity in the body (general question) as associated with a pH balancing product by Vaxa International (product question if possible). Is there any harm in using a pH balancing product even if there is no pre-testing. The question comes from a discussion in a little remedy store in Key Largo, FL where we are staying. When we researched online prior to buying the products and getting the hair test, Quackwatch came up "naturally" calling it all nonsense.

Hair testing can show certain heavy metal levels but it is not common for people to have such problems and most symptoms and illnesses people have are not due to heavy metal toxicity. Unless a person has kidney disease there is no need to manipulate pH levels of the blood or urine, the kidneys do it quite well and most such products are not of benefit for the majority of users.

Thank you for what appears to be a lifetime of dedication to alternative healing practices. I also appreciate your exposing Stephen Barrett, M.D. for poor research

and questionable often negative conclusions. As a lifelong healer and retired medical researcher, today I discovered a very well written authoritative article on Quack Watch that was exactly correct until he cited a fluffy poorly conducted study and came to a dead wrong conclusion. I immediately read over a few of his other articles and all exhibited the same succinct authority figure dead on accurately describing situations followed by one or more poorly done studies to justify his barbed incorrect opinion. I looked into his background then winced when I saw he is a retired teaching psychiatrist. Traditional medicine makes people well. We take pills or have surgery, recover and get on with our lives. Psychiatrists almost never get anyone well and rarely do they ever have a patient get off drugs. Psychiatry fixes brains by electrocuting them and pouring psychotropic chemicals into them that block our ability to feel, experience, think and control our emotions. In other words, this group serves as the street dealers for psychotropic pharmacy companies with the worst healing record in medicine. Like witch doctors of old when their efforts fail they charge more and add more drugs. If failure continues they blame the patient because they just don't have a clue what is really going on or how to make repair. If we could stop the pharmaceutical companies from public advertizing and bribing physicians to promote their products then replace FDA approval processes with non-financially motivated peer reviewed studies, I suspect most Psychiatrists would have little to prescribe to patients because most psychotropic drugs would never get approved. How could someone who teaches this nonsense be considered an authority figure in any sense of the word?

I partially agree with some of the things you mention. There are a number of psychiatric medications that are quite useful in treating psychiatric conditions such as schizophrenia and there are a number of competent mental health professionals. I do see your point, though, that we are overmedicating patients and not using alternative dietary supplements or other methods that could be just as, or more, beneficial with fewer side effects. Questions have been raised as to whether prescription antidepressants such as Prozac, Zoloft, or Paxil are any more effective than placebo pills. And certainly we are overmedicating children who are diagnosed with mood disorders or ADHD.

We are thinking of choosing Dr. Ray Sahelian for a project regarding a chapter in a professional book on nutritional medicine. This was not a whim but a long thought decision based on his remarkable knowledge and insight in the field of nutritional medicine and also on the type of person he is, as judged by the way he deals with various issues (one that I read about is his reply to some remarks made by S. Barrett, MD some time ago - a reply that was highly professional and in line with the accepted standards of good manners).

I read your article about Quackwatch and I had the same impression that his reviews are very slanted as to what big Pharma or the FDA opinion, which for the most part is not in the best interest of patients. You mentioned you agreed with Dr. Barrett about Hulda Clark's book being pitiful.

I just wanted to thank you for being outspoken about Stephen Barrett and the wealth of information listed on your page about this matter. It was extremely helpful and I believe his serving the AMA and Pharmaceutical companies by slandering other

people is despicable. I continually read your website because of your personality and effort to be as objective as possible.

I recently read the article written by Dr. Barnett regarding Standard Process. I am new to this product and wondered if you have done any research about Standard Process. My new chiropractor suggested i use it because my bones are too weak. I haven't taken the product long enough to see any side affects or progress. I'd like to give my doctor the benefit of the doubt that he's looking out for my best interest. I thank you in advance for your time and response.

As a general rule, I prefer not to comment on products I have not formulated or comment on other companies.

I found your post on quackwatch very interesting. I also find the same kind of bias in Dr. Dean Edell. The hard fact is that Dr. Barrett's entire industry has thrived on the use of psychotropic drugs so its no surprise he has little critizm for big pharma, they have, after all, been his life's blood. I grew up a Seventh-Day-Adventist, I no longer practice that, but I know that they have been amazing combining sound nutrition and the use of herbs and supplements with state of the art western medical techniques.

Do You have experience with MMS drops and also Hulda Clark Zappers for treating micro-organisms in the body - like Protozoa, Nematodes, Larvae, Parasites, worms, lymes. What do you do for these?

I am not familiar with MMS drops. As to the zapper, I think the promises and claims are far ahead of any clinical studies or proof and this smells like a scam to me. I try to keep an open mind, but sometimes claims of cures are made that stretch the imagination.