

Product No. 3: Unapproved weight-loss product marketed as an alternative to a prescription drug combination

FDA issued an import alert for a Canadian-made weight-loss product whose claims compared the product with two prescription weight-loss drugs taken off the market after FDA determined they posed a health hazard.

Paranoid Accusations

“Drug companies make it nearly impossible for doctors to resist prescribing their expensive pills for what ails you”

“It seems these billion dollar drug giants all have one relentless competitor in common they all constantly fear—natural remedies.”

These claims suggest that health-care providers and legitimate manufacturers are in cahoots with each other, promoting only the drug companies’ and medical device manufacturers’ products for financial gain. The claims also suggest that the medical profession and legitimate drug and device makers strive to suppress unorthodox products because they threaten their financial standing.

“This [accusation] is an easy way to get consumers’ attention,” says Marjorie Powell, assistant general counsel for the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America. “But I would ask the marketers of such claims, ‘Where’s the evidence?’ It would seem to me that in this country, outside of a regulatory agency it would be difficult to stop someone from making a claim.”

Think about this, too: Would the vast number of people in the health-care field block treatments that could help millions of sick, suffering patients, many of whom could be family and friends? “It flies in the face of logic,” Barrett says on his Quackwatch Website.

Meaningless Medical Jargon

“... Hunger Stimulation Point (HSP)

...”

“... thermogenesis, which converts stored fats into soluble lipids ...”

“One of the many natural ingredients is inositol hexanicontinate.”

Terms and scientific explanations such as these may sound impressive and may have an element of truth to them, but the public “has no way of discerning fact from fiction,” Aronson says. Fanciful terms, he says, generally cover up a lack of scientific proof.

Sometimes, the terms or explanations are lifted from a study published in a reputable scientific journal, even though the study was on another subject altogether, says Martin Katz, a compliance officer and health fraud coordinator for FDA’s Florida district office. And chances are, few people will check the original published study.

“Most people who are taken in by health fraud will grasp at anything,” he says. “They’re not going to do the research. They’re looking for a miracle.”



Weight-Loss
Drug
Prescription
Drug Replacement

Promises of Easy Weight Loss

“Finally, rapid weight loss without dieting!”

For most people, there is only one way to lose weight: Eat less food (or fewer high-calorie foods) and increase activity.

Note the ambiguity of the term “rapid.” A reasonable and healthy weight loss is about 1 to 2 pounds a week.