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Statement by Coalition Against Fraudulent Claims about Medicines

By *moderator*
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Patrick Holford

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Patrick Holford is currently touring South Africa promoting his philosophy on nutrition. Mr Holford has made some dangerous and unproven statements. We respond here to a few of these.

HIV/AIDS

Mr Holford has written that "AZT, the first prescribable anti-HIV drug, is potentially harmful and proving less effective than vitamin C". This is false. A trial on HIV-positive pregnant women showed that vitamin C combined with other nutrients helped slow progression to AIDS, although only marginally. Numerous trials have shown that combination antiretroviral treatment, including AZT, restores the health of people with HIV. Antiretrovirals have side effects but so too do the large doses of vitamin C recommended by Holford.

AVIAN INFLUENZA (BIRD FLU)

No recorded human cases of Bird Flu have occurred to date in South Africa. Nevertheless, an outbreak of this disease would probably cause many deaths. Mr Holford states that it is highly likely that vitamin C would be effective against bird flu if the dose is high enough. The World Health Organisation recommends oseltamivir phosphate (Tamiflu) as the most likely effective treatment for Burd Flu. There is no evidence that Vitamin C will be effective.

CANCER

Mr Holford claims that Vitamin C supplementation can prolong the lives of cancer patients four-fold. There is no credible evidence to support this claim.

Mr Holford appears to base the above claims on in vitro (laboratory tests outside the human body) or disreputable research. We respectfully ask Mr Holford to stop making these claims which have the potential to cause people with life-threatening illnesses to make medically unsound decisions.

LINKS

Recommendations by the NIH on vitamin supplementation:
http://www.nih.gov/news/pr/may2006/od-17.htm

Articles about Mr Holford:
http://www.guardian.co.uk/life/badscience/story/0,,1983925,00.html

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