

<b>Big Pharma, Big Problems?</b> <i>Environnement en Mutation (axe 2 thème 1) / Relation au monde (axe 3 Thème 2)</i>	
Big Pharma: companies producing medical drugs, <u>seen as having a powerful and bad influence:</u>	
	What issues are raised by our need for medication?
At the end of the Unit, I will	Have learned about how the USA created an addiction to pain killers know why Big Pharma are so subjected to conspiracy theory understand the place India is taking in our modern world
What documents will be used ?	<p><b>1- Profits and scandals</b></p> 1a- Protest outside Purdue Pharma headquarters, Stamford, Connecticut, 2019 1b-The Late show, Stephen Colbert Links Big Pharma's Sackler Family To America's Opioid Crisis, 15 sept. 2018 1c- Painkiller Season 1, trailer by Netflix 1d- Louvre removes Sackler name from museum wing amid protest, angelique chrisafis (Paris) and Joanna Walters (New York), The Guardian, Wed 17 Jul 2019 1e1 – drug spoon sculpture, Fernando Alvarez and Domenic Esposito, 2018 1e2- How Did A Giant Heroin Spoon Sculpture Land In Front Of Purdue Pharma's HQ?Connecticut Public Radio, Ray Hardman, September 13, 2018 <p><b>2- Sowing for conspiracy theories</b></p> 2a- cartoons file : sowing for conspiracy theory 2b- The Vaccine-Autism Myth Started 20 Years Ago. Here's Why It Still Endures Today, Jonathan D. Quick MD, MPH and Heidi Larson, <i>Times.com</i> , Feb 28 2018 <p><b>3- Rising India</b></p> 3a- India Pharmaceuticals Market forecast, <i>Navadhi</i> , 2019 3b- Indian Pharma Industry Poised for Growth in 2023 and Beyond   video by Mint Explains 3c- Reasons Why India Is the 'Pharmacy' of the Developing World Doctors Without Borders, June 24, 2016 <p><b>4- New challenges</b></p> 4a- Amazon plots a course into the healthcare industry Sooraj Shah, <i>Technology of Business reporter, BBC</i> , 5 January 2021 4b- The Guardian view on medicine shortages: a global

	issue for which Britain needs a plan Editorial, <i>The Guardian</i> , Sun 21 Jan 2024
What will I learn about ?	All the modern issues raised about pharmacy how Big Pharma is a world-wide issue
Final Task	You will write a pamphlet to rally people to a demonstration concerning a cause whether positive or negative, linked to the Big Pharma issue

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUR FINAL TASK:

- 1- You will need to hand in your pamphlet on D day
- 2- your peers will have a saying about how convincing your pamphlet is by voting for their 3 favorite pamphlet
- 3- your pamphlet will need to be printed on a2-side A4 paper
- 4- you will need to exploit at least 3 ideas from the lesson

nan goldin : reportage photo sur antidouleur → musée new york

<https://www.biography.com/activists/a80795825/nan-goldin-big-pharma-sackler-oxycontin>  
documentaire – place big pharma /avis

#### 1- Big Pharma: Profits and scandals

1a- Protest outside Purdue Pharma headquarters, Stamford, Connecticut, 2019

travail sur la photo => gros plan sur les boites,  
personnes derrières, allongées, messages sur les panneaux: 200 deads a day killed  
perdue pharma è prescribed to you by the sackler faily + wake up FDA : US Food and Drug  
Administration, responsible for approving any new food or drug product on the American  
market

1b-The Late show, Stephen **Colbert Links Big Pharma's Sackler Family To America's Opioid Crisis**, 15 sept. 2018

Stephen Colbert in the satirical talk show the Daily show, takes a sober look at the family behind Purdue Pharma, the company that unleashed OxyContin on the world and now looks poised to make even more profit off those who have become addicted.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_cJ\\_lyeH7Os](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_cJ_lyeH7Os)

opioid crisis, Sackler / Purdue - pharmaceutical inoovcation

réaction à “the Maker of Oxycontin downplayed the risk of addiction and exaggerated the benefits of the drug

Anne-Charlotte Legrand – Académie de Versailles

// avec le documentaire Netflix (trailer)

1c- Painkiller Season 1, trailer by Netflix

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=appUef70Gtw>

1d- Louvre removes Sackler name from museum wing amid protest, angelique chrisafis (Paris) and Joanna Walters (New York), *The Guardian*, Wed 17 Jul 2019  
imagine what actions would you take in retaliation against Purdue

1e1 – drug spoon sculpture

+ texte 1e2 How Did A Giant Heroin Spoon Sculpture Land In Front Of Purdue Pharma's HQ? Connecticut Public Radio, Ray Hardman, September 13, 2018

Travail sur le texte, la notion d'art et de dénonciation: pourquoi la cuillère, emplacement, réaction de la police?

## 2- Sowing for conspiracy theories

dossier de cartoon: prévoir plusieurs exemplaire de chaque cartoon, les découper et les laisser choisir les combinaisons de leur choix: 1, 2 ou 3.

écrire un paragraphe court autour de ces doc expliquant ce choix

retour sur chacun des cartoon:

<https://view.genially.com/665b14c727570b00146e81bb/presentation-sowing-for-conspiracy-theory>

2b- The Vaccine-Autism Myth Started 20 Years Ago. Here's Why It Still Endures Today, Jonathan D. Quick MD, MPH and Heidi Larson, *Times.com*, Feb 28 2018

## 3- Rising India

3a- India Pharmaceuticals Market forecast, *Navadhi*, 2019  
explicatooin autour des

3b- Indian Pharma Industry Poised for Growth in 2023 and Beyond | video by Mint Explains

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TCpkWa1O9nY>

vidéo de 3 minutes, accent Indien, prise de note en CO => qu'est- ce qui fait que l'industrie pharmaceutique en Inde fasse autant de bénéfice? D'où vient son succès?

Identify the target market abnd comment on the benefits for the patient

idée rédaction: article to emphasize the modernity and productivity of the Indian pharmaceutical industry and underline its potential on the global stage

3c- Reasons Why India Is the 'Pharmacy' of the Developing World *Doctors Without Borders*, June 24, 2016

## 4- New challenges

Anne-Charlotte Legrand – Académie de Versailles

4a- Amazon plots a course into the healthcare industry Sooraj Shah, *Technology of Business reporter, BBC*, 5 January 2021

travail sur le texte, explications mise en relation avec les pb posés aux états-unis  
souligné les différents et expliquer pourquoi les pb rencontrés ne seront pas les mêmes mais propose malgré tout un avantage au client

4b- The Guardian view on medicine shortages: a global issue for which Britain needs a plan Editorial, *The Guardian*, Sun 21 Jan 2024

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/jan/21/the-guardian-view-on-medicine-shortages-a-global-issue-for-which-britain-needs-a-plan>

1a- Protest outside Purdue Pharma headquarters, Stamford, Connecticut, 2019



1d- Louvre removes Sackler name from museum wing amid protest, Angélique Chrisafis (Paris) and Joanna Walters (New York), *The Guardian*, Wed 17 Jul 2019

## Louvre removes Sackler name from museum wing amid protests

Angelique Chrisafis in Paris and Joanna Walters in New York –  
*The Guardian* | Wed 17 Jul 2019

1 The Louvre museum in Paris has removed the name of the art philanthropist family Sackler from a major wing devoted to eastern antiquities. The Sackler name  
5 came down this month after a protest by the US art photographer and activist Nan Goldin, who said it should be removed from gallery walls because some members of the multibillionaire family had benefited from the business of addictive painkillers. [...]

10 After targeting other US and UK art institutions, Goldin demonstrated outside the Louvre demanding it rename the Sackler wing of eastern antiquities because one branch of the family is accused of profiting from the US opioid crisis, being the owners of the American pharmaceutical company that produces the highly  
15 addictive prescription painkiller OxyContin.

20 Goldin, along with Paris-based activists affiliated with her campaign group, Pain (Prescription Addiction Intervention Now), waded into the fountains beneath the Louvre's pyramid with more than a dozen activists carrying red banners reading "take down the Sackler name". [...]

25 On Wednesday, the Louvre confirmed in a written statement that the Sackler name had come down from the wing because the legal time-period of name-rights had ended.

The statement said: "The Theresa and Mortimer Sackler foundation supported the refurbishment of

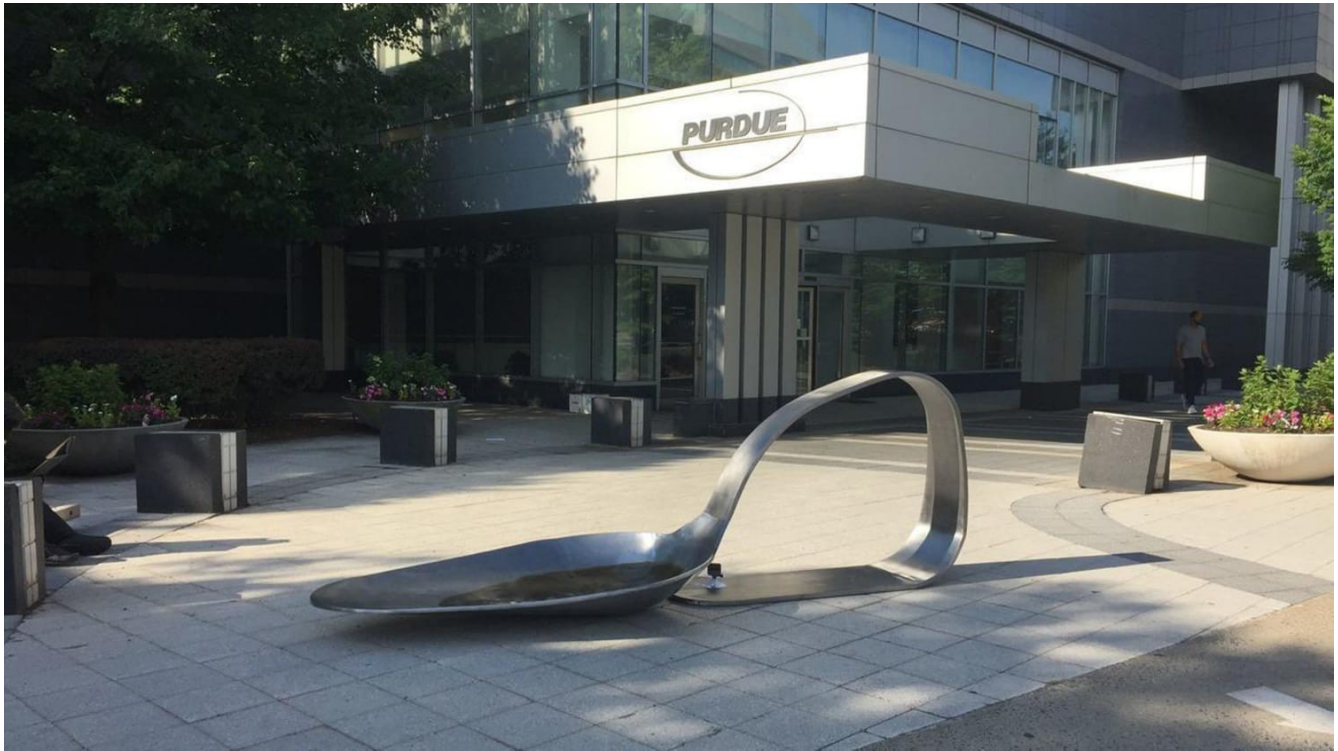


30 rooms of Persian and Levantine art in the period 1996 to 1997. Since then, there has been no other donation from the Sackler family. On 10 October 2003, the museum board decided to limit the duration period of named rooms to 20 years. This donation is more than 20 years old, the name-period is therefore legally closed and these rooms no longer carry the Sackler name."

35 The museum did not comment when asked if the name was removed in reaction to protests over the opioid crisis. [...]

40 Goldin commented, "It's important for other activist groups to see that direct action can move mountains. The opioid crisis is coming to other countries and it's important that people become aware that the Sackler name is synonymous with the opioid crisis. It would not have been a national public health crisis in the US without this family's companies, including Purdue Pharma and others, hard-selling<sup>1</sup> the most addictive prescription painkillers in history."

50 The artist began her campaign against the Sacklers after she became addicted to powerful prescription painkillers. She has since demanded that arts institutions in the US and Britain refuse further Sackler donations and argued that the family should instead pay for treatment and rehabilitation for opioid addicts.



## 1e2- How Did A Giant Heroin Spoon Sculpture Land In Front Of Purdue Pharma's HQ?

One morning last June, a giant sculpture of a heroin spoon was dropped on the campus of Purdue Pharma in Stamford. It was a piece of protest art meant to hold the pharmaceutical company responsible for its role in the opioid epidemic. The incident led to the arrest of Stamford gallery owner Fernando Alvarez and the confiscation of the sculpture. The heroin spoon has since been returned to the Domenic Esposito, the artist who created it, and Alvarez is due in court on Monday facing charges related to the installation.

The story behind the giant heroin spoon began back in April of this year. Stamford's Fernando Luis Alvarez Gallery was working on a new exhibition, "Opioid: Express Yourself." It was as an artist-led project aimed at calling out entities Alvarez believes are complicit in the current opioid epidemic - namely the pharmaceutical companies who produce opioid painkillers and their army of lobbyists, lawmakers, and the doctors who overprescribe painkillers.

"I've been in waiting rooms in doctor's offices, and you see people sitting there like zombies," said gallery owner Fernando Alvarez, "they go in there, they get their prescription drugs and they walk out. How can doctors not see that? Doctors knew, Purdue Pharma and these other companies must have known, and our politicians were just turning a blind eye to it as they took money from them."

Through a college friend, he was introduced to Boston-based sculptor Domenic Esposito. Domenic Esposito's brother had been struggling with addiction for years. He has been sober for almost a year now, but the years of rehab and relapse have taken its toll on Esposito and his Italian immigrant family.

“My mom found a spoon in the house, and she called me in this crazy panic broken, saying ‘I found another spoon’ in broken English,” said Esposito. “And so your hearts starts racing, and all the air gets sucked out of your lungs. The spoon for me is a dark sort of emotional symbol. (...) It was very emotional, I mean I had my brother visit me every once in a while and be there with me,” Esposito said. “It was a difficult process because you're under this time constraint, but there's an emotional factor. It's really kind of a visceral feeling that I felt at that point constructing the spoon.”

Esposito finished the spoon in mid-June. With the sculpture finished, he and Fernando Alvarez got to work planning the second part of this venture into guerilla art - figuring out the logistics of seamlessly dropping the sculpture in just the right spot on the campus of Purdue Pharma. (...) Esposito said the secret to the perfect drop was precision, speed, and practice.

They dropped the spoon exactly where they wanted it for the perfect photo op - on the sidewalk in front of the headquarters with the Purdue Pharma logo in the background. Soon after, Esposito says things started going crazy. The police were not accustomed to dealing with a guerilla art situation, and with Alvarez and Esposito refusing to move the sculpture there were unsure how to proceed.

“It just kept escalating with the police. First, we just had a normal policeman on watch come up and try to get us to remove it, then the sergeant, then the captain, and then finally after an hour of negotiations it went all the way to the state Attorney General. So, at that point the police hauled it away with a front loader.”

Esposito said the police handled the situation professionally and respectfully. In the end, gallery owner Fernando Alvarez was arrested on two charges - obstruction of free passage, and interfering with police, both misdemeanors. Alvarez says it was all part of the plan, and he has no regrets.

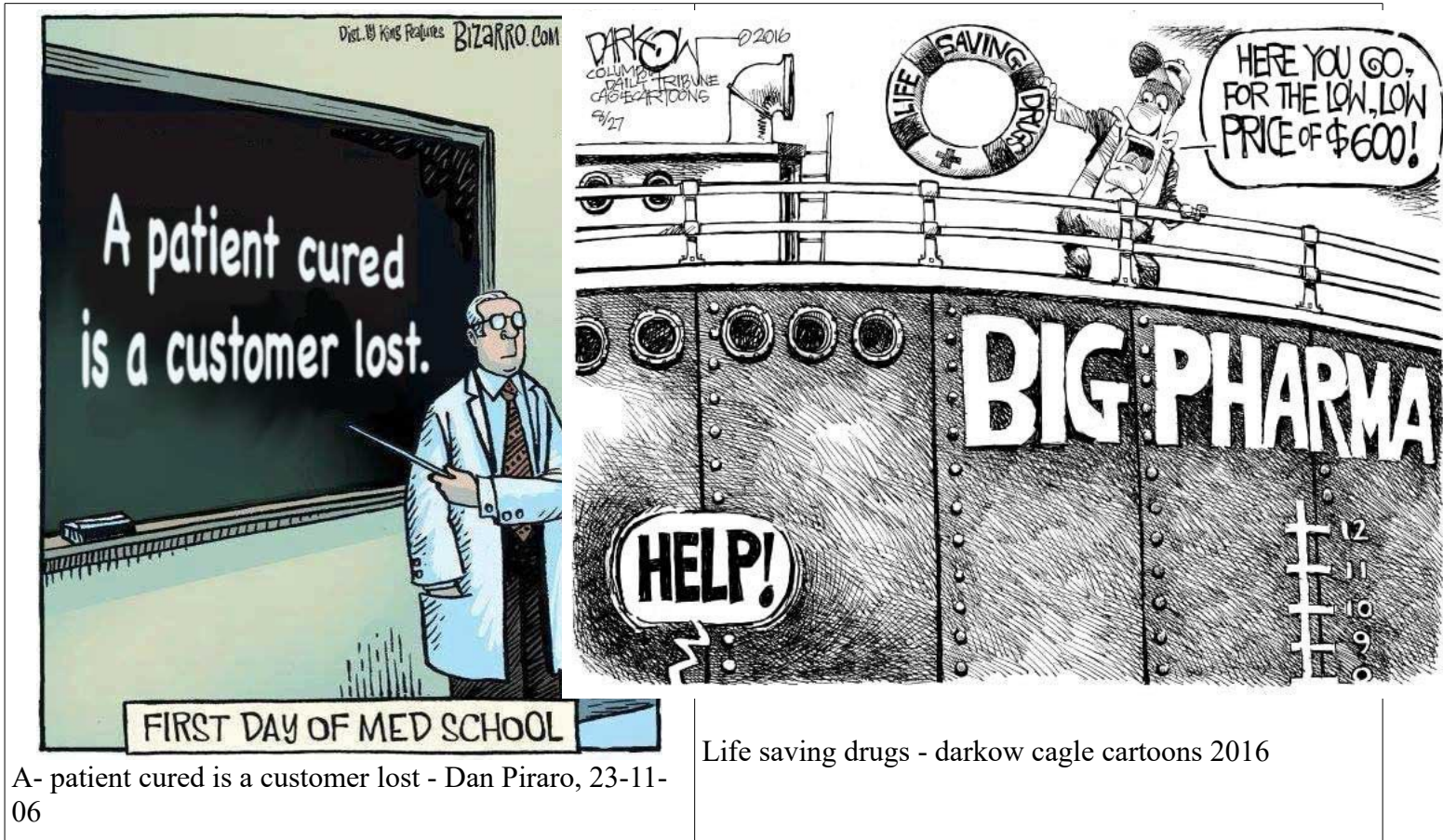
“Absolutely none. None at all,” said Alvarez. “This is such an important mission. We needed this to be an easy way for people to remember the importance of accountability for the mass deaths that have happened.”

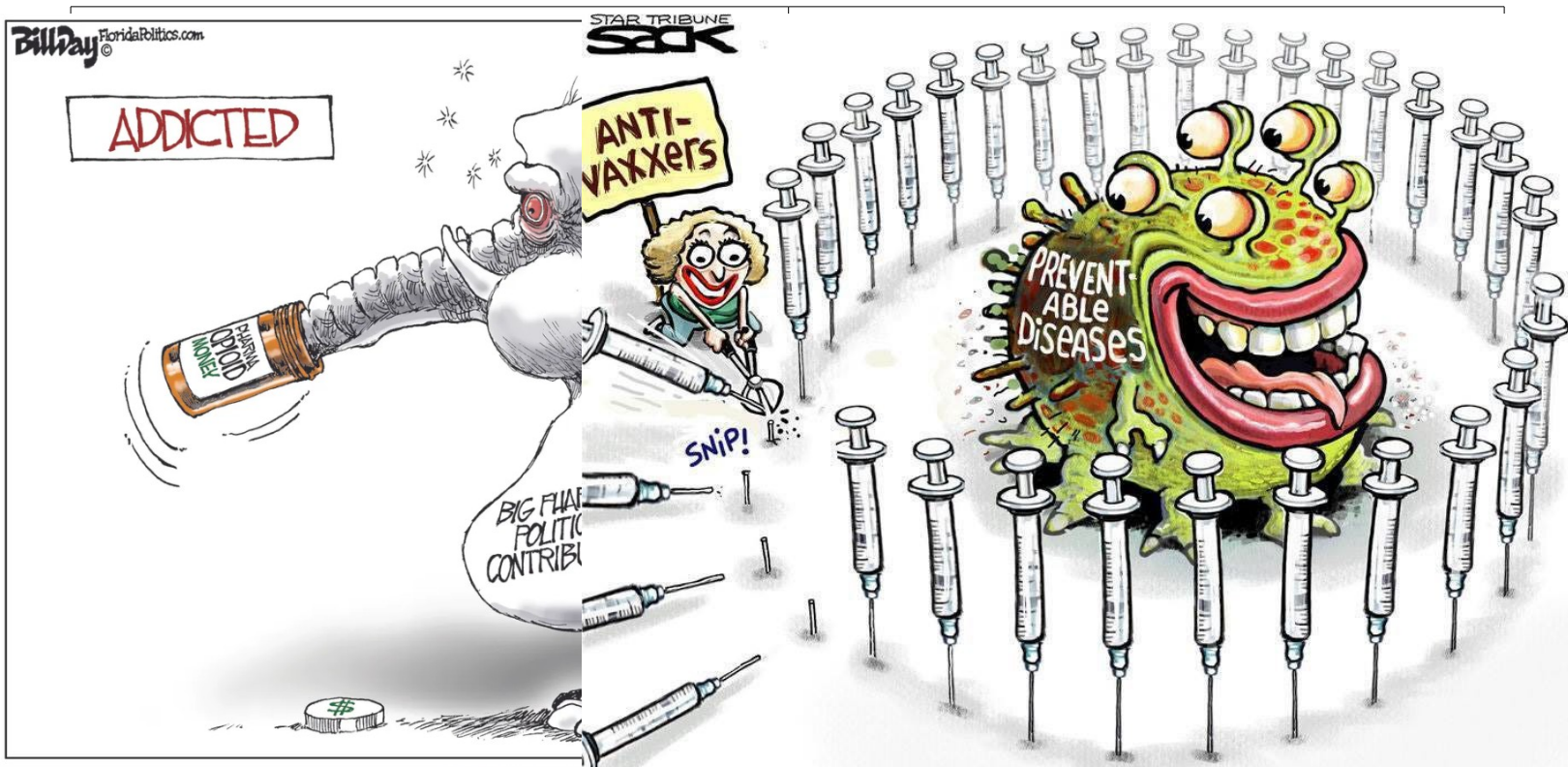
In a written statement to Connecticut Public Radio Purdue Pharma says “We share the protesters’ concern about the opioid crisis, and respect their right to peacefully express themselves. Purdue is committed to working collaboratively with those affected by this public health crisis on meaningful solutions to help stem the tide of opioid-related overdose deaths.”

Alvarez said he isn't buying it. He said for too long companies like Purdue Pharma have used money, lawyers, lobbyists and statements from its public relations department to avoid real consequences for their part in the opioid epidemic.

“People are coming together and getting organized, but we still need to move the needle,” said Alvarez. “We will not be victorious until these people are put behind bars. We just want justice for them. Put them in front of a judge; put them in front of a jury. That is what we want for these people -to be treated like the rest of Americans if they committed a crime. That's all.” Last month a judge ordered the Stamford police to return the heroin spoon sculpture to Domenic Esposito. Fernando Alvarez will be in court on Monday where he is expected to receive accelerated rehabilitation.

Connecticut Public Radio, Ray Hardman, September 13, 2018





Addicted, Bill Day, Cagle Cartoons, 2018

Anti-vaxxers, Star Tribune sack 2017



Big pharma conspiracy, Jackson Paul Art

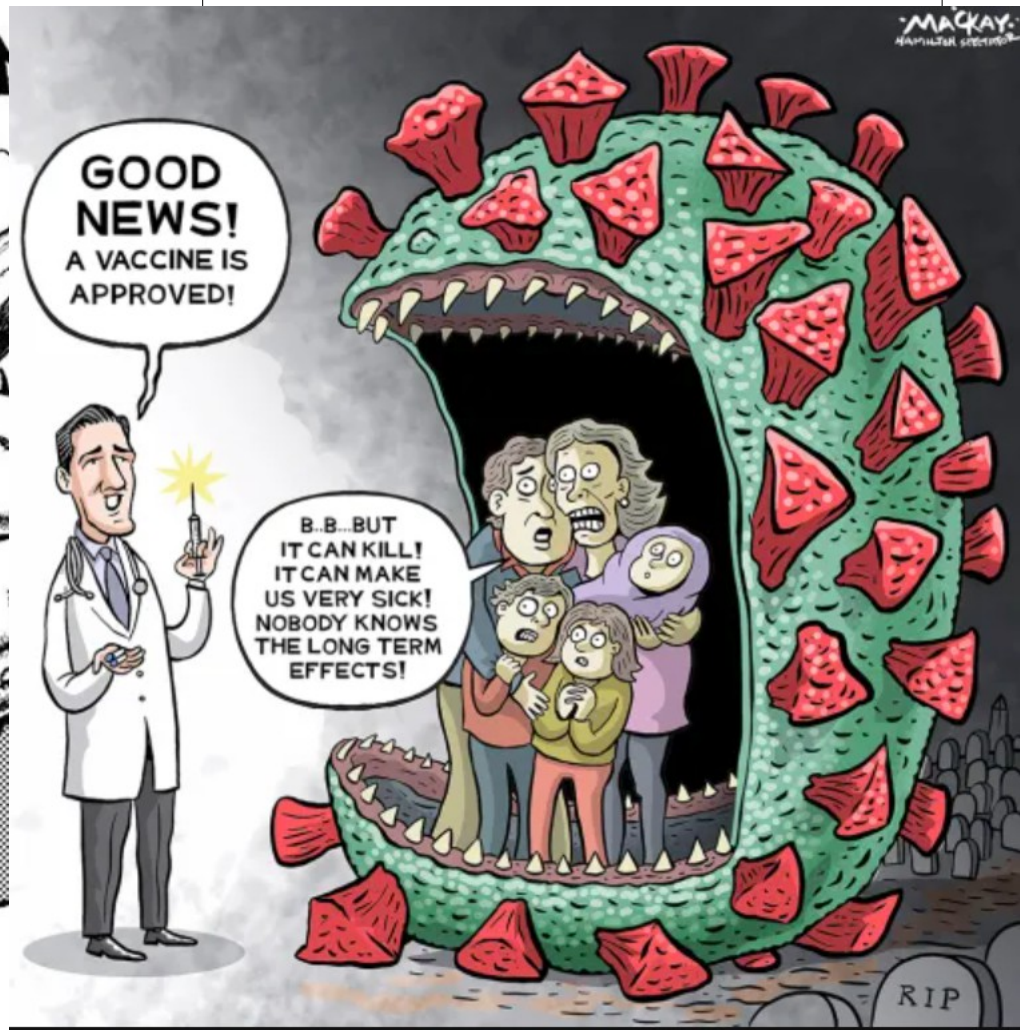


Big Pharma's tentacles, undated, unnamed



Big-pharma research and deve dept, Wolverton, cagle cartoons

company's motto big pharma concept, Tupungato 2022



WWW.NATURALNEWS.COM

Counterthink- mike adams and dan Berger, *naturalnews.com*, 2006

... approved but... , MacKay, 2020



Pandora's needle, untitled, unnamed, undated



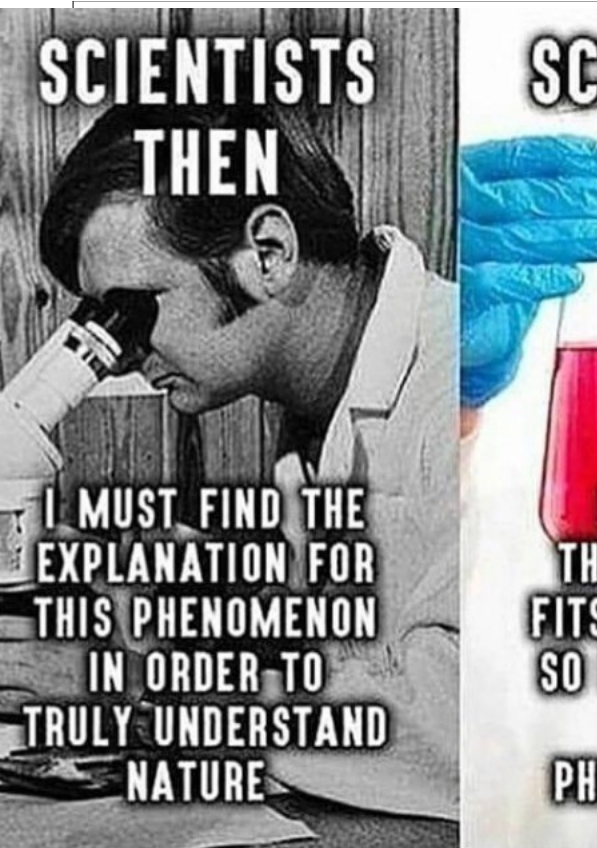
Pharmaceutical industry creates customers 2017



We re both making a killing, Dave Grandlund, *political cartoon.com*



of big pharma- mike adams and dan Berger, nauyramews.com 2006

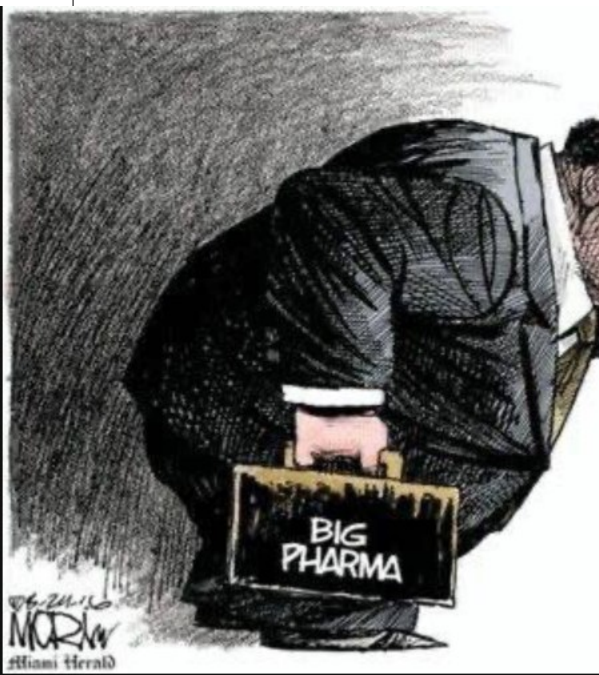


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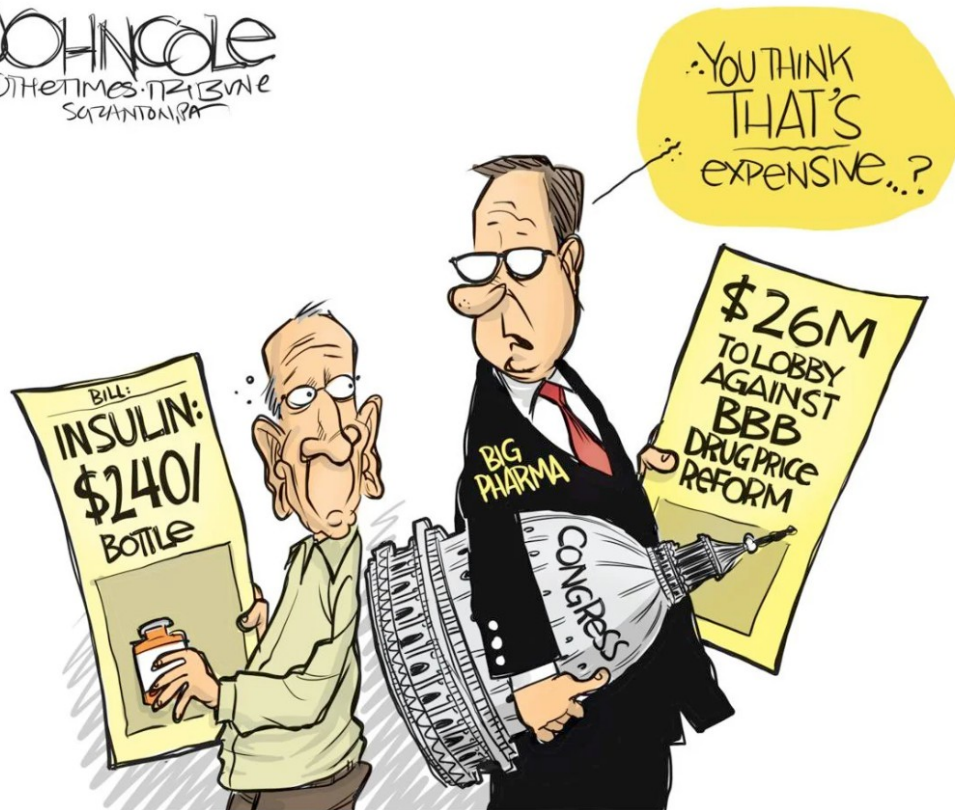
l- scientist then and now, undarted, unam

m- scientist then and now.PNG



your money or you life - Morw - Miami Herald

JOHN COLE  
SOMETIMES THE TRUTH  
IS ANTONI, PA



You think that is expansive- John Cole Cagle Cartoon 2022..PNG

2b -

## The Vaccine-Autism Myth Started 20 Years Ago. Here's Why It Still Endures Today

Anti-vaccination headlines—like “HPV vaccine leaves another 17-year-old-girl paralyzed”—populate the Internet. That, and “Mom researches vaccines, discovers vaccination horrors, goes vaccine free,” are just a few examples of the fake science news stories shared this month on social medias.

If you are a parent on social media, you’ve likely seen many posts just like these. Maybe you’ve even clicked on one, curious. What’s the harm, right? As a family physician with four decades of experience fighting preventable disease around the globe and a professor of anthropology, risk and decision science studying global vaccine confidence, we’ve seen the deadly harm that fraudulent science and unfounded claims can cause.

The vaccine-autism myth is one chilling example of fraudulent science. February 28, 2018 marks the 20th anniversary of an infamous article published in the prestigious medical journal, *The Lancet*, in which Andrew Wakefield, a former British doctor, falsely linked the MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine to autism. The paper eventually was retracted by the co-authors and the journal. Wakefield was de-licensed by medical authorities for his deceit and “callous disregard” for children in his care. It took nearly two decades for

the UK immunization rates to recover. By the end, UK families had experienced more than 12,000 cases of measles, hundreds of hospitalizations — many with serious complications — and at least three deaths.

Stunningly, the vaccine-autism myth still persists. It was amplified by the British media during its early years, later by celebrity endorsement and more recently by worldwide social media. Wakefield has continued his own relentless personal campaigning, moving well beyond the initial MMR vaccine scaremongering to attacking the CDC in his controversial film *Vaxxed*. Europe's 35 measles-related deaths in 2017 — due largely to people not getting vaccinated — also reflects how Wakefield's vaccine-autism scare can spark vaccine refusals that lead to debilitating and fatal cases of measles.

In the U.S., measles was declared eliminated in 2000. Since 2000, however, there has been a resurgence of measles, with more than 2,216 reported cases. Wakefield's anti-vaccine fanaticism contributed to the 2015 outbreak in Disneyland in California, which eventually infected more than 130 people, and to the 2017 measles outbreaks in Minnesota, where his message persuaded many parents not to vaccinate their children. The vaccine-autism myth has also prompted an alarming number of millennials — the generation that came of age in the era of Wakefield's misinformation — in the U.S. not to vaccinate their children. Vaccine reluctance does not apply just to measles; flu kills 100 to 300 children under age 5 each year, and up to 85% of them were not vaccinated when they died.

### **What will it take to protect parents and children from this kind of fraudulent science?**

First, trust is vital in order for people to accept health interventions. The messenger can be more important than the message. Thus, the advice of trusted primary healthcare providers, families and friends is often much more influential than the cold facts of official sources. Fortunately, trust can be built or rebuilt over time, as the UK demonstrated when it reached 95% measles immunization coverage.

Second, the medical community must redouble its efforts to ensure the integrity of its evidence. And it must move rapidly to address suspected scientific fraud. Wakefield was not disciplined by the UK medical authorities, nor was the article retracted by *The Lancet* until 2010, despite serious concerns raised by experts at the time of publication and the 2004 expose on Wakefield's sloppy science and retraction by co-authors.

Third, print and broadcast media have a special responsibility to provide clear, evidenced-based reporting. The decline in MMR immunization following Wakefield's article was accelerated by the pro-Wakefield UK media. Conversely, the recovery from Wakefield's damaging impact was catalyzed by the 2004 investigative journalism reports exposing Wakefield's flawed science and conflicts of interest. Truth wins, if we're committed to telling it.

Fourth, state health officials must ensure that public health policies are enforced as intended. California has raised its vaccine coverage by enacting stronger vaccination policies to curtail such exemptions.

Finally, in an age of social media, frequent distrust of authorities and increasing epidemic threats, parents and educators have a vital role in helping children from an early age learn the skills of critical thinking and informed skepticism to discern life-saving facts from fatal fictions.

Over a century ago, American writer Mark Twain quipped, "A lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes." This has certainly been the case for the vaccine-autism myth. In a world in which fabricated science is plentiful and spreads rapidly, we must be vigilant if we are to avert epidemics that would have been prevented were it not for vaccine denial.

Too much is at stake for ourselves and our children to not apply the lessons from the vaccine-autism debacle to avert the dangerous long-term consequences when fake science gains traction and threatens the health and lives of everyone.

*Dr. Quick is a senior fellow at the nonprofit Management Sciences for Health and an instructor at Harvard Medical School.*

*Heidi Larson is director of the Vaccine Confidence Project and Professor of Anthropology, Risk and Decision Science at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.*

Jonathan D. Quick MD, MPH and Heidi Larson, Times.com, Feb 28 2018

[Without Borders](#), June 24, 2016

Low-cost, generic medicines produced in India are helping millions of people across the world get affordable, high-quality medication.

Developing countries across the world face several challenges, key among which is providing their people with affordable medicines of high-quality. (...)

Before 2005, India did not grant product patents on medicines. This allowed for the production of low-cost, generic versions of medicines that were patented in other countries. Indian manufacturers, with their reverse engineering skills, were the first to market low-cost versions of the life-saving cancer (Imatinib) and HIV drugs (Zidovudine) within a few years of their US launch. Robust competition among generic producers in India has resulted in a price reduction of more than 99 percent for medicines across different therapeutic areas, including Hepatitis C, HIV/AIDS, Malaria, Tuberculosis and medicines for non-communicable diseases that are critical for public health programmes.

Today, India is the world's primary source of affordable HIV medicines as it is one of the few countries with the capacity to quickly produce newer HIV drugs as generics. These drugs are In 2005, India adopted a strict medicines patent law that, while allowing patent protection for new pharmaceutical compounds, makes it tougher to get a patent on new forms of existing medicines.

The law was designed with the objective of stopping drug giants from indulging in 'evergreening,' an unfortunately common and abusive patenting practice in the pharmaceutical industry. India chose to prioritise access to medicines over the business interests of the pharmaceutical industry.

This public health approach to setting strict patent standards is in line with international trade rules and encourages timely entry of affordable generics into the market, driving prices down.

The prices of medicines in the United States are one of the highest in the world because US laws and policies blindly favour pharmaceutical companies over generic competition, allowing multiple and extended monopolies on the same medicine, leading to exorbitant prices for lengthy periods of time. On the other hand, India's policy and lawmakers have identified generic competition as the strongest and most effective force to reduce drug prices. Having fewer patents in India means more generic competition, which means more affordable medicines for people and governments in developing countries.

In contrast to India's stricter patentability criteria, the U.S. allows the practice of 'evergreening' that helps delay generic competition and keeps prices high. It is a common tactic by which the pharmaceutical industry extends their monopoly on drugs beyond the original patent's 20 years. Long monopoly of a single company in the US keeps prices high because generic competition is blocked.

The infographic below highlights the sky-high prices of patented drugs in the US vs low-cost Indian generics ( Source: [Pixabay](#))

DISEASE & DRUG	PATENTED MEDICINE	GENERIC MEDICINE
	Cost per person per month (\$)	
<b>HIV</b> Tenofovir/ Emtricitabine/ Efavirenz	2,500	12
<b>Hepatitis C</b> Sofosbuvir+ Daclatasvir	49,000	151
<b>Chronic myeloid leukemia (CML)</b> Imatinib	8,860	66
<b>Lung cancer</b> Erlotinib	6,658	161
<b>Kidney, Liver cancer</b> Sorafenib	11,595	111
<b>Drug-resistant TB</b> Linezolid	9,233	30
<b>Asthma &amp; COPD</b> Fluticasone Propionate & Salmeterol	300	4
<b>Hepatitis B</b> Entecavir	1259	35

Doctors Without Borders, June 24, 2016

## Amazon plots a course into the healthcare industry

"I think the impact would be huge," says Ahsan Bhatti, owner of online pharmacy Quick Meds. He is concerned about the prospect of online giant Amazon moving into the pharmacy business in the UK.

"I'm worried. They'll have a massive marketing budget, and they'll definitely take a sizeable chunk out of every other pharmacy on the market. There will be closures as a direct result of it," he says.

Mr Bhatti will be closely watching developments in the US where Amazon Pharmacy launched in November. The service allows customers to make pharmacy transactions through Amazon and receive unlimited, free, two-day deliveries if they have a Prime membership. Although Amazon hasn't yet announced plans for other countries, chemists in the UK are preparing themselves for a new competitor.

"What is lacking in every other pharmacy across the UK is the logistics and Amazon do that exceptionally well. It's exactly what consumers want - having a prescription by 10am and dispensed by Amazon to them in the evening. The likes of Lloyds Pharmacy and Boots can't do that, and independent pharmacies can only do this on a local level," says Mr Bhatti.



Amazon has one of the best logistics operations in retail

The UK has a very different pharmacy market from the US, where drug makers can set their own prices. In the UK, drug prices are regulated, so Amazon would not be able to compete with pharmacies on price, but rather on convenience and speed.

Mr Bhatti opened Quick Meds in March. It offers products online, as well as consultations over phone, WhatsApp, email, live chat and video, and even offers same day services locally. However, for nationwide orders, the company relies on Royal Mail - and this is where Mr Bhatti believes Amazon has the edge over online pharmacies as it has proven it can be relied upon for speedy deliveries.

"As great as Royal Mail are, occasionally things go wrong or missing and these delays might not be a big deal for online shopping but if we're talking about a heart or diabetes medication, all of a sudden, it's a problem," he says.

It's not just logistics that Amazon has on its side - the sheer size of the company enables it to have an advantage at the negotiating table. Jeff Bezos, Amazon's chief executive, once said "your margin is my opportunity", implying that Amazon delivered better prices by removing the costs added by the middlemen in the supply chain. The pharmaceutical and healthcare sectors have complex and inefficient supply chains that he would look to cut out.

This ultimately means that Amazon may negotiate better prices, and potentially offer discounted rates to consumers to get them through the online door of Amazon Pharmacy. According to Scott Galloway, professor of marketing at NYU Stern, consumers will be the winners over the short and medium term.

Sooraj Shah, Technology of Business reporter, BBC, 5 January 2021

## **The Guardian view on medicine shortages: a global issue for which Britain needs a plan**

For anyone who relies on medication to treat a health condition, a shortage will be unwelcome. In some cases, for example cough and cold remedies, this will be a worrying inconvenience. But in others, such as diabetes drugs, antibiotics and antipsychotics, there are serious implications for health and wellbeing. In extreme circumstances the lack of a drug could pose a threat to life.

Worryingly, the Motor Neurone Disease Association claims that concerns raised with the health secretary, Victoria Atkins, and her department, have not been properly dealt with. With around 100 medicines on a shortages list, the government appears under-prepared and slow to act.

The UK is not alone in facing drug supply-chain challenges. This is a global issue, which has been rising up the agenda of EU states and the US as well. Rich western countries, along with much of the rest of the world, are heavily reliant on the pharmaceuticals manufacturing capacity of India and China for sufficient quantities of generic, off-patent drugs. During the pandemic the risks of this model became obvious when countries were forced to compete for vaccines, and India placed export restrictions on many items, including paracetamol.

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Both the EU and US have responded with significant moves towards reshoring. France is building a paracetamol factory large enough to meet half of all European demand. Belgium has made the issue a theme of its EU presidency. Rules about state aid look set to be altered, and pharmaceuticals recategorised as a strategic industry like semiconductors. While European manufacturing will make supplies more secure, it is also expected to make drugs more expensive and reduce carbon emissions and other environmental damage associated with them.

Teams in the Department of Health play a crucial role in overseeing the UK's medicine supply. Thanks to stockpiling and other measures, departure from the single market did not lead to chaos. But Brexit has increased pressures. The fall in the value of the pound has made the UK a less attractive market. There is a balance to be struck between putting downward pressure on prices and incentivising suppliers. Current shortages suggest that the current system isn't working well

As well as day-to-day management, the UK needs a strategy. This should involve working with, rather than against, the EU on reshoring production in Europe. It should include plans for spikes in demand such as that seen for HRT, following a campaign around menopause symptoms and a shift in prescribing patterns. Shortages such as that affecting the type 2 diabetes drug Ozempic after it began to be prescribed for weight loss, should be anticipated even if they cannot be avoided. Poll after poll shows how much the public cares about healthcare. Workforce shortages and lack of investment are the biggest issues, but access to medicines is vital, too.

Editorial, *The Guardian*, Sun 21 Jan 2024

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