

Comment to "The East" reviewer:

I'm going to give this reviewer some slack, and assume he or she is young and simply not aware yet of corporate America's "profit at all costs" mentality. I have not seen this film yet, but the premise does not surprise me. As Brit Marling has stated in another interview . . . "these corporate crimes . . . are simply pulled out of the current headlines". If you live long enough, you will see the same old story over and over again, whether in the pharmaceutical industry or any other industry. I believe the day will come when the rampant and indiscriminate use of the fluoroquinolone antibiotics will go the way of thalidomide, DES, and most recently, Vioxx, but not without a fight. Simply look up any of these previous "wonder drugs" to see how many people had to be killed, maimed, or born with birth defects before FINALLY these drugs were pulled from the general market or greatly limited in their use. My own mother was "prescribed" cigarettes – yes, that's right – as part of her "prenatal care", she was told to start smoking by her doctor while pregnant with my younger sister "to prevent hemorrhoids". We can laugh, or be aghast now at such a notion, but an entire generation, including the medical profession at the time, was repeatedly brainwashed by the corporations manufacturing these products, and they would leave no stone unturned in promoting the "health and safety" of their products for the sole interest of their own profits (search: "Evil Vintage Cigarette Ads Promising Better Health" for a nice review).

Here is a quote taken from an article about Vioxx (USA Today, 10/12/2004, Health and Behavior Section, by Rita Rubin): How Did Vioxx Debacle Happen?

Critics describe the rise and fall of Vioxx as a cautionary tale of masterful public relations, aggressive marketing and ineffective regulation. "The FDA didn't do anything," says Eric Topol, chief of cardiovascular medicine at the Cleveland Clinic. "They were passive here."

Just insert the word "fluoroquinolone" here – there is no difference. Ruthless and aggressive marketing by the drug companies, and an impotent FDA in bed with Big Pharma, ensure continued disbelief and unawareness of this issue by both the medical profession and the general population. With the advent of the internet, that is now changing. We no longer have to rely on scattered case reports of only the most observant, cognizant, and intrepid of physicians willing to report these adverse effects of the drug they prescribed – *ie, willing to admit that they harmed, more than helped, their patient*. Thousands of patients now have a voice, and an outlet for their horrific stories and this continued atrocity, in the form of the internet. And the creative cast of "The East" have now added their own input in their own creative way to increase awareness of this issue.

Greater awareness on this issue is essential, and spreading the word through the media and social media is the ONLY way this is probably going to happen. Patients have a right to informed consent regarding the potential adverse effects from fluoroquinolone antibiotics, including possible life-long disabilities. Widespread public pressure through the media is the best hope to provide awareness for all and to pressure physicians to prescribe responsibly, the pharmaceutical companies to warn adequately, and the FDA to regulate appropriately.

If the pharmaceutical companies and the FDA even remotely gave a S***T about the "health and safety" of the population they market to, they would put their money where their mouth is and take some of their billions in profits to study and research 1)who and why some people have these adverse reactions, 2)how to prevent these adverse reactions from happening, and 3) how to effectively treat them so as to return health and functionality to those who have been severely hit. They would also be promoting "RESPONSIBLE USE" – not widespread, nonchalant use for everything under the sun, passing this stuff out "like candy" to a disbelieving and unsuspecting public.

Sadly, they will not do this out of the “goodness of their hearts”, or because they feel any moral, ethical, or responsible reason to do so. It will only be when they are absolutely backed into a corner and FORCED to do so, just as occurred with thalidomide, DES, Vioxx, and cigarette warnings. Until then, people’s lives will continue to be utterly destroyed by the fluoroquinolone antibiotics. And until the research is done to find the commonalities or cause of why some of us are afflicted, hold your breath and hope it's not YOU.