

The unwellness industry

By Bill Kilpatrick

This past summer, after coughing up blood for a couple weeks I went to the doctor, had a CT scan and found out that I had an eight-centimetre growth in my left lung. Devastating does not begin to describe how my family and I felt. The way the medical field works is that they assume it's cancer until proven otherwise and given that I grew up in a home with smokers and used to smoke myself, lung cancer was always a possibility, it just showed up a little sooner than I thought.

I had witnessed many other people who ran into financial difficulties after starting treatments and I was not about to let that happen to my family. So, I started up a GoFundMe account and the outpouring of support from the community was overwhelming. People made us dinners, gave money and gifts and gave us so much moral support that we could not have gotten through it without them. But I also received offers of 'support' from some people in the alternative medicine community, and while I know they meant well, I had decided to go with modern medicine, as alternative medicine is unregulated and can be dangerous. For example, one person insisted that I use hydrogen peroxide treatments, also called bio-oxidative therapy or hyperoxygenation therapy, to cure the growth in my lung. They claimed that a family member of their used it and it worked. Another person offered homeopathic/ naturopathic treatments and yet another offered me the free use of their tree of life copper coil healing bed that was purchased from former NASA employee David Sereda and yet another insisted that I smoke a certain plant called mullein to help.

While I believe that all of these people had the best of intentions, and meant me no harm or ill will, I also believe that they all have been misled by pseudoscience, alternative medicine gurus, and grifters out to take their money, and that the cures they offer can in fact cause more damage than good. In his 2024 book entitled, *Mind the Science: saving your mental health from the wellness industry*, Dr. Jonathan N. Stea, pointed out that, 'The reality is that pseudoscience is not an innocent game it's harmful in at least three ways. It can produce harm directly as a result of the therapies used. It can indirectly take hard earned money and time away from people and it can further erode the scientific foundations and trust in professions that tolerate it's use.'

When I started to look into some of these suggested 'therapies' and alternative medicines I was shocked by what I found. For example, a 1993 article in the *Cancer Journal For Clinicians*, debunked the use of hydrogen peroxide for cancer treatment as 'harmful' and concluded that, 'Hyperoxygenation therapy' 'bio-oxidative therapy' is a method of cancer therapy based on the erroneous concept that cancer is caused by oxygen deficiency and can be cured by exposing cancer cells to more oxygen than they can tolerate. The most highly touted 'hyperoxygenating' agents are hydrogen peroxide, germanium sesquioxide, and ozone. Although these compounds have been the subject, of legitimate research there is little or no evidence that they are effective for the treatment of any serious disease and each has demonstrated potential for harm. And yet some 30 years later it is still being touted by alternative medicine as a cure.

The harm that the journal is referring to, according to a 2020 article on healthline.com, happens when the subject either injects or drinks 35 percent hydrogen peroxide, the concentration used in the treatment, which can cause, 'inflammation of the blood vessels at the injection site, oxygen bubbles that block blood flow and lead to gas embolisms, which can be fatal, destruction of red blood cells (red cell hemolysis) and/or kidney failure, mouth, throat, and stomach burns, ulcers, foaming at the mouth, stomach bloating, loss of consciousness, and trouble breathing.' Not exactly a 'cure' that I'm willing to roll the dice on.

In terms of mullein, a common plant found in Ontario, webmd.com pointed out that despite it being used 'for asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia, colds, cough, and many other conditions, there is no good scientific evidence to support these uses,' adding that, 'There isn't enough reliable information to know what an appropriate dose of mullein might be. Keep in mind that natural products are not always necessarily safe and dosages can be important.' Verywellhealth.com pointed out something similar stating that, 'The list of mullein's purported uses is long. However, much of the evidence supporting these uses is weak. Many studies evaluating mullein have been performed in vitro (i.e., in a test tube) rather than in humans. Though we can learn many things from in vitro studies, we won't know the full effects of mullein until further human trials are complete.' So, mullein might be good, but there's no definitive research yet to back the claim up.

In terms of homeopathy, Dr. Stea says that it is sometimes referred to as the "air guitar of medicine" because it postulates that a remedy becomes more effective when the active ingredient has been diluted out of existence. A 2024 article in McGill University's Office for Science and Society puts it more bluntly stating, "Today, scientists bristle at the idea of nonexistent molecules having a therapeutic effect. And that is exactly what we are dealing with, because with our current knowledge of chemistry, it is possible to determine that after a sequence of hundred-fold dilutions repeated 12 times, there is not a single molecule of the original substance left. Because homeopaths now have to admit this, they have forged an alternate explanation for how homeopathy works: The shaking between dilutions leaves an imprint, a ghost if you will, of the original substance in the solution. Not only is there no evidence that the structure of water can somehow be altered in this fashion, there is no explanation offered for how this ghostly image can cure disease."

To put it succinctly, homeopathy is scientifically implausible. Its precepts defy the laws of chemistry, physics and biology. It cannot possibly work. While homeopathy has shown to elicit the placebo effect, there is no evidence that it works beyond that.

I went to <https://www.davidsereda.co/vortex-bed> to find the David Sereda copper coil tree of life healing bed. While I didn't find the copper coil tree of life healing bed, I did find the entry level, level one, two, and three "energy vortex beds" that range in price from \$2,222 up to \$8,888 USD. The site claims that using copper coil fields, which are placed into the beds, will "generate your own harmonic frequency field" while blocking 5-G and electro magnetic frequencies. The site also claims that the four copper coils inside the beds will, "create a vortex that surrounds you while spinning your chakras." Of course, you have to also purchase an amplifier to activate the coils and those range from \$260 to \$660 USD.

The site claims that by purchasing the products you will, "activate an evolution within your DNA and align to your light body," a statement that would certainly fall under the scientific term "pseudo-profound bullshit" (it's a real term, look it up). However, there is a big caption at the bottom of his page that states, "This web site is not intended to give medical advice, make any diagnoses or keep you from seeing your physician. Always get your doctor's advice first. Neither the statements nor the products on these pages have been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration or claim to treat or cure any disease. Any testimonial is the opinion of the individual and not endorsed by us or guaranteed by us." A statement that did not fill me with optimism regarding my hoped for "DNA evolution." However, the person who offered this service to me told me that they had the "full collection of Royal Rife cancer frequencies for all types and form of cancer." At this point I just felt bad for this person who had invested, most likely thousands of dollars into these sham cures and unproven treatments.

Although I was emotionally distraught believing that I had cancer and could die, I at least retained my critical thinking skills and avoided all of these pseudoscience "treatments" that would have possibly done nothing, hurt me, killed me, or at the very least wasted the little time I thought I had left, but sadly many people still fall for these scams. An issue that we will delve into in part two.