

The New Zealand Government Reaches for Total Medical Control

For millions of years, humans and animals have maintained their health by eating the fruits of the earth.

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*The necessity and benefits of a broad natural diet are evident from Egyptian skeletal remains from 6000 years ago, which suggest scurvy—a disease resulting from a lack of vitamin C. In 1753 a Scottish surgeon, James Lind demonstrated that scurvy could be treated with citrus fruit. **The New Zealand government seems intent on changing history.***

Just before Christmas, our Government introduced the [Therapeutic Products Bill](#) for its first reading. Public consultation is being rushed through the summer holidays here in the southern hemisphere and closes on February 15th. The Bill contains 423 pages of dense provisions with countless cross references. I am not sure whether any MPs actually read it before voting for its acceptance or whether the public could stand to do so. You can view my video summary of its draconian provisions [here](#).

You might be interested in the kind of nation we will end up inhabiting:

Reverse Patenting

If a Natural Health Product is found to benefit a serious illness (such as lemons which benefit scurvy), according to the Bill it should be classed as a medicine. Consequently, according to the letter of the new law, only doctors will be allowed to prescribe lemons. Joking apart, most foods benefit serious illness. You might think there is no need to pass a law classifying them as medicines, but according to the government you would be wrong.

80% of drugs are in fact derived from the properties of plants. For years pharmaceutical companies have been trying to patent medicinal plants and secure a monopoly of their supply and use. But this effort largely failed in the patent courts. The remedy for pharmaceutical companies is contained in the Bill being introduced by our Labour

government. If a plant is used to make a medicine or the molecular structure of any of its compounds is mimicked by a medicine, then the use of the actual plant should be restricted.

For this reason, in 2016, a bevy of well-paid Ministry of Health experts (???) produced an idiotic list of common plants that they envisioned should be restricted. Natural products in this list included cinnamon, eggplant, almond, mustard, tea (yes you did read that correctly), coconut, and many many others. The present Bill (the third attempt over the years to get this past Parliament) sets up the same conditions that prompted the 2016 list of restricted plants. A sort of frenzied desire to control the minutia of individual life driven by a mad instinct that the government always knows best.

More than 50% of NZ citizens use natural products, so you might think their availability should not be controlled by the government. Wrong again. The Bill requires the appointment of a regulator who will decide for us what among what we have eaten for millennia can be sold openly and what should be restricted. The idea that one person can decide for all of us what plants that grow in the earth, can be sold, eaten, or used puts New Zealand in a unique class among tin pot kingdoms. We can imagine as we gather around the family breakfast table a swarm of well-paid government experts with pens and questionnaires hovering close by for a final check.

The situation at the border is very similar. If a herb benefits health, it will be a medicine and therefore cannot be imported except with a permit. Border officials will be very busy examining packages and if they find anything healthy, tossing it in the bin. Am I exaggerating? No. Rauwolfia Serpentina is an Indian herb that reduces blood pressure. [Studies such this one](#) published in 2015 show it is a safe and effective treatment for high blood pressure, but it is banned here in New Zealand because some hypertension drugs contain synthetic copies of one of the many alkaloids found in the whole plant—reverse patenting at its best.

Why is the Government Intending to Regulate Natural Health Products?

A rational answer to this question is hard to find. A recent EU study found that natural health products are 45,000 times safer than pharmaceutical drugs. The government, however, apparently believes they are unsafe, but where is the evidence? It doesn't exist. An imaginary NZ doctor explains to their teenage patient:

“Years ago, before you were born, dearly beloved, a person whose name is lost in the mists of time might have felt a little off colour after taking a vitamin tablet and then recovered quickly. Ever since then, the New Zealand government has quite rightly been very suspicious of vitamins and plants grown in soil. So they are introducing a new and very honest law for us all.” or words to that effect.

There are many continuous traditions of natural approaches to health that have been followed by cultures on every continent for thousands of years and still are. There are more modern ones too that have attracted followers guided by trained practitioners. These include Indian Ayurveda, Chinese medicine, Chiropractic, Homeopathy, etc. The idea that a regulator who is unfamiliar with these traditions should control their practice and availability is inherently flawed.

This Bill represents an attempt to impose a modern medical/pharmaceutical straight jacket

on the process of medical choice. A straight jacket that will no doubt be administered by people who are unfamiliar with and even opposed to natural medicine. The apparent intention is to drive people towards pharmaceutical-based medicine. It is worth noting that modern medical misadventure and misprescription is the third leading cause of death—hardly a direction that deserves a monopoly.

The logic of insisting on total government control of medical choice escapes me. It fits with a perspective that has been steadily growing throughout the pandemic: the government is seeking to control every aspect of life and impose a kind of uniformity on the nation. This originates from a distorted one size fits all view of reality. Diversity is actually a great source of progress and happiness, not something to be stamped out—a discredited communistic perspective.

It is rather curious that for two years the government has been denying there is any connection between serious illness and mRNA vaccination despite tens of thousands of instances of illness proximate to inoculation and studies showing a statistical connection, as well as plausible biomolecular mechanisms. In contrast, on account of a very, very small handful of unproven historical complaints about natural health products, despite widespread safe use, they wish to control what we eat and what health choices we can make.

Whichever side of the vaccine debate you are on, it should be clear that the government cannot have it both ways. They can't apply different and incompatible logic as it suits their agenda. All the more curious when many vaccine injured and long Covid sufferers are relying on natural health products to help get them through conditions which many of our medical professionals deny exist.

Last night I spoke to a medical doctor who described how his comments on the benefits of Vitamin C and D have been censored by his colleagues and officials. No surprise really, doctors only spend an hour or two learning about the principles of nutrition during the entire course of their long training. One of his colleagues told him the only benefit of vitamins is to change the colour of urine. That just about says it all. James Lind, who found that lemons cure scurvy, must be turning in his grave.

There is in fact no reasonable rationale for introducing restrictions on Natural Health Products, they are not harming anyone and studies show that many of them have significant benefits for health. The introduction of the new law will cost a lot and it will be paid for by financial levies on manufacturers, importers, suppliers, practitioners, and retailers. A single company selling 300 products, each making two health claims, will be liable for as much as \$3 million in government charges. Ultimately these costs will be passed onto the public making natural health products unaffordable.

What the Bill Doesn't Do

Gradually over the last few years, synthetic flavours and additives have been turning up in processed supermarket items. If you are buying vanilla ice cream, it is now usually labelled as containing natural vanilla flavour. This is not in fact made from natural vanilla beans, it is a synthetic flavour. The use of the term "natural" is intended to disguise this fact. In 2016 our Ministry of Health approved over 3,000 synthetic ingredients, many of them without safety testing. The Therapeutic Products Bill will do nothing to correct the sleight of hand that is describing synthetic additives with an unknown safety profile as 'natural'. I discuss many of the ways synthetic additives are affecting health in my book *Your DNA Diet*.

Nor will the Bill encourage the distribution of information about natural approaches to health that studies show are very beneficial in controlling common serious health conditions. Advice for example about diet, exercise, and the curbing of unhealthy habits such as smoking, excessive drinking, or ultra processed foods. Changes in lifestyle can be very influential in reducing cardiac problems as this BBC [interview](#) reports. Many other serious health condition outcomes could be improved in this way including cancer, obesity, diabetes, blood pressure, etc.

If the government wishes to encourage improvements in health and longevity, it would do well to launch a public education programme about natural health products and approaches rather than seek to limit their use.

What You Can Do

If we wish to be able to continue to freely choose natural health options, herbal medicines and supplements without government interference, we will need to speak up. Go to [this link](#) to make a submission before February 15th. Write to your MP and complain that the appointment of a regulator amounts to an open ended blank cheque to control the sale and use of products used by more than 50% of our population without fully specifying the principles he should use. Moreover, it will put many NZ businesses out of action. I could say a lot more but now is the time for all of us to have a go and hold up our hands. If we don't, we will only have ourselves to blame. Given the short submission time available, we have to take a scattershot approach, contact as many people as you can and explain how this is going to seriously affect their health options now and down the line.

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