

Curing the Ills of Alternative Medicine and Questionable Mental Health Practices



Curing the Ills of Alternative Medicine and Questionable Mental Health Practices

May 21, 2005 - Center for Inquiry, Amherst, NY

Do any of these ongoing trends worry you?

- Thousands of worthless and unsafe nostrums are being deceptively promoted as “natural medicines.”
- Mysticism and New Age rituals are widely being packaged and sold as effective psychotherapies.
- Schools are introducing pseudoscience and false information into their medical, nursing, and clinical psychology curricula.
- Peer-reviewed medical, nursing, and psychology journals are publishing dubious, even fraudulent reports.
- States are licensing quacks to practice medicine or provide psychotherapy.

Every one of these trends should worry you.

“Complementary and alternative medicine” is increasingly being promoted and funded by the federal government and the healthcare industry — despite the absence of scientific evidence of its efficacy. Likewise, the field of mental health practice — including psychology, psychiatry, counseling, and social work — is being overrun with unproven therapies and postmodern/pop psychology.

It's taken centuries and the work of countless doctors and researchers to move clinical practice onto sound scientific foundations. Countless millions alive today owe their lives and health to science-based therapies. Yet, there is a growing effort now underway to tear those foundations down. That effort is richly supported by the nutritional supplement and alternative medicine industries. These industries have been aggressively challenging the need for rigorous standards for medical and mental healthcare research and healthcare products, practices, and education. This assault on medical science poses a public danger that goes beyond the marketing of unproven and potentially harmful products and techniques.

The conference, sponsored by the Commission for Scientific Medicine and Mental Health, will investigate what's driving the assault on science-based medicine and mental healthcare and will explore what can be done to stop the erosion of healthcare standards.

While pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturers are required to establish the safety and efficacy of their products in well-controlled clinical trials, alternative medicine companies have been exempted from such requirements. As a result, the public is being increasingly exposed to products that are hyped with unproven and even fraudulent claims. Studies have shown that many of these products don't have the ingredients as described in their labeling. Much worse, some are laced with dangerous prescription drugs or are adulterated with lead, mercury, or other toxic substances. In the realm of psychotherapy, there has been precious little interest in scientific quality control. Many clients are still being urged to “recover” purported memories of early abuse, and children are being seriously abused and even killed by “therapists” who are using pseudoscientific practices to “treat” behavioral problems.

CME Accreditation

This program has been planned and implemented in accordance with the Essential Areas and Policies of the Accreditation Council for CME (ACCME) through joint sponsorship with the University at Buffalo School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences (UB) and the Center for Inquiry's Commission for Scientific Medicine and Mental Health.

UB is accredited by the ACCME to sponsor CME for physicians.

UB designates this program for up to six Category 1 credits toward the AMA's Physician Recognition Award.

Each physician should claim only the actual time he/she spends in educational activities.



Application for CME credit has been filed with the American Academy of Family Physicians. **Determination of credit is pending.**



PLEASE POST

**Center for Inquiry
1310 Sweet Home Rd.
Amherst, NY**

Category I Continuing Medical Education Credit for physicians is pending through SUNY at Buffalo School of Medicine.

Sponsored by



Commission for Scientific Medicine and Mental Health

This conference will:

- 1 **Increase your knowledge of unproved or discredited practices in medicine and mental health;**
- 1 **Provide you with tools to recognize dubious therapies and healthcare practices;**
- 1 **Help you to understand how even highly intelligent and well-educated individuals can be fooled by false medical and mental health claims;**
- 1 **Help you defend science-based medicine and mental health practices within your healthcare center and within your community.**

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE

Saturday, May 21, 2005

REGISTRATION: 8:00 - 9:00 a.m.

Morning Session: 9:00 - Noon

Introduction: Paul Kurtz, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, SUNY at Buffalo, chairman CSMMH.

Wallace Sampson, M.D., editor, *Scientific Review of Alternative Medicine (SRAM)*: "The Political Takeover of a Scientific Field: Alternative Medicine"

Steve Novella, M.D., assistant professor of neurology, Yale University School of Medicine: "Alternative Medicine and the Standard of Care"

Timothy Gorski, M.D., assistant clinical professor, University of North Texas Health Science Center and associate editor, *SRAM*: "They Ain't Measuring What They're Measuring"

Kimball C. Atwood, IV, M.D., clinical assistant professor, Tufts University School of Medicine and associate editor, *SRAM*: "Naturopathic Medicine: Politics Trumps Science"

Luncheon: Noon - 1:45 p.m.

David Triggie, Ph.D., distinguished professor, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, SUNY at Buffalo and president, Center for Inquiry-Institute. "Medicines for the Masses: Myths, Magic and Morals"

Afternoon Session: 2:00 - 5:30 p.m.

Scott Lilienfeld, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology, Emory University, Atlanta, GA, editor, *Scientific Review of Mental Health Practice (SRMHP)*: "Pseudoscience in Mental Health: Fads, Fallacies, and Falsehoods"

Timothy Moore, Ph.D. chair of psychology, York University, Toronto, Canada, and associate editor, *SRMHP*: "Salem Revisited: When Quacks Get Involved in Legal Proceedings"

Brandon Gaudiano, Ph.D., Brown U. School of Medicine and Butler Hospital, Providence, RI: "Questions and Controversies Surrounding Antidepressant Drugs: The Media's Role in the Debate"

James Alcock, Ph.D., professor of psychology, York University, Toronto, Canada: "Why Any Psychotherapy May Seem to Work"

James Herbert, Ph.D., associate professor and director of clinical training, Department of Psychology, Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA: "How Do We Bridge the Gap Between Science and Practice in Mental Health?"



Accommodations: Hampton Inn, 10 Flint Rd., Amherst, NY; 1 (800) HAMPTON, (716) 689-4414, www.hamptoninnbuffaloamherst.com; **Motel 6,** 4400 Maple Rd., Amherst, NY; (716) 834-2231, (800) 4-MOTEL-6, www.motel6.com

For more information, contact Andrew Skolnick, executive director, CSMMH, P.O. Box 741, Amherst, NY 14226; (716) 636-4869 x 216; askolnick@centerforinquiry.net

News media should contact: John Gaeddert, Interim Director of Public Affairs, CFI, P.O. Box 741, Amherst, NY 14226; (716) 636-4869 x 219; jgaeddert@centerforinquiry.net

YES! Register _____ person(s) for the Commission for Scientific Medicine and Mental Health Conference

Curing the Ills of Alternative Medicine and Questionable Mental Health Practices

Name _____ Address _____

City, State, Zip _____ Phone _____

E-mail _____

Conference fee (including box luncheon): \$69 Full-Time Student Rate: \$45

Payment Check/M.O. payable to Center for Inquiry Charge to my: MC Visa AmEx

Card Number _____ Expiration _____

Signature (for credit card payment) _____

MAIL TO: Center for Inquiry, P.O. Box 741, Amherst, NY 14226 or fax: (716) 636-1733