

An Object Lesson In Fake 'News' Sites



By Ruth Kava — August 3, 2017



The headline promises information about a "NEW LANDMARK STUDY" linking aspartame consumption to lymphoma and leukemia in humans. Now that's a global crisis if I ever heard one! But wait — before you toss your diet sodas, let's delve a little deeper into what this website is really doing.

I suppose you could call this a "Lazarus" site because they're resurrecting some old data and claiming it's new. But it isn't. The site, called Realfarmacy, supposedly is alerting true believers to the results of the "longest running study on aspartame as a carcinogen in humans." The [study](#) ^[1] they refer to was published in 2013, for one thing — hardly new. For another, it was a combination of 2 observational studies — the Nurses' Health Study and the Health Professionals Followup Study — both from the data-dredging kings at the Harvard School of Public Health.

Realfarmacy claims that this research confirms "previous high-quality research on animals," but the animal study [they refer](#) ^[2] to was done by the Ramazzini Foundation. And their research has been thoroughly debunked [by us](#) ^[3] as well as many others. For one thing, they use Sprague-Dawley rats, a strain that is known to be prone to developing tumors as they age. For another, the animals weren't disease-free to start with, and their experimental design was flawed.

Furthermore, although Realfarmacy thinks the observational Harvard study was the be-all and end-all of proof that aspartame is carcinogenic to humans, the authors of that study don't agree. Those investigators stated that



“ the inconsistent sex effects and occurrence of an apparent cancer risk in individuals who consume regular soda do not permit the ruling out of chance as an explanation.”

No kidding. This type of observational study, long-term or not, that depends solely on self-reported consumption data, and that results in unexplained gender differences, cannot be assumed to prove anything about causation. Perhaps the folks behind Realfarmacy don't know that, or if they do, they don't realize that other people can read the results for themselves.

This is just one more part of the anti-aspartame cottage industry that plagues the internet — and misleads consumers who would really like to know what the science says, rather than simply follow the conspiracy theorists.

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Links

[1] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23097267>

[2] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16507461>

[3] <http://www.acsh.org/news/2006/05/30/you-dirty-rats>