

Liver damage from supplements? Let s drink to that.

By ACSH Staff — September 8, 2014



Our regular readers will not be surprised about any of this, or

the fact that we are again writing about it.

Despite subtly worded labels that suggest that dietary supplements are both safe and health-promoting, they are neither they are untested drugs, which are allowed to make quasi-claims thanks to the abomination that is disingenuously called the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994 (DSHEA).

This anti-scientific and almost certainly corrupt legislation can be blamed on Senators Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Tom Harkin (D-IO). Hatch s home state, Utah, is the home of much of the multi-billion dollar supplement industry, and it is a pretty safe bet that the Senator did not introduce this legislation because he believed that buying anabolic steroids and illegal stimulants off the shelf was an especially good path to health.

As part of this law, the FDA, which must give approval to prescription drugs following safety and efficacy studies that can take ten years, has no power to regulate any supplement before it is marketed. Only after adverse events are reported a mathematical certainty can they act to remove the drug from the market. If you are thinking that this protocol does not suit public health, you are far from alone.

The latest news comes from a paper in the journal *Hepatology* entitled Liver injury from herbals and dietary supplements in the U.S. Drug-Induced Liver Injury Network. It contains just about exactly what you'd expect.

The [study](#) ^[1] examined 839 herbals and dietary supplement users (HDS) who were evaluated between 2004 and 2013. The supplement user data were collected from eight referral centers that are part of the Drug-Induced Liver Injury Network (DILIN) a part of [The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases](#) ^[2].

Of the 893 supplement users studied, an astounding 130 (15.5 percent) were found to have experienced liver injury as a result of their HDS use. Perhaps even more astounding is that over the study period, the rate of liver injury climbed nearly three-fold from seven percent to 20 percent.

Of the 130 people who sustained liver damage, ascertained by biochemical and physiological changes in liver function, transplants and death, 45 cases were from anabolic steroids.

Dr. Bloom asks, Can anyone please explain to me what anabolic steroids, which are quite dangerous, and banned in many sports, are doing in these health stores? Are they herbs? No. Are they safe? No far from it. He continues, They are allowed to be sold because they are natural, which is a policy that is so far beyond stupid that it leaves me speechless a rare event indeed.

Dr. Bloom has written frequently about this maddening subject. You can read his recent op-ed on Science 2.0 entitled Liver Let Die: Gambling With Supplements [here](#) [3].

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[1] <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/enhanced/doi/10.1002/hep.27317/#publication-history>

[2] <http://www2.niddk.nih.gov/>

[3] <http://v>