

# More supplement opinion pieces: The Times and CNN

By ACSH Staff — February 6, 2015



As the layers of fraud begin to peel away from the onion, the dietary

supplement industry has been coming under increased scrutiny lately.

Earlier this week, Anahad O Connor's far-reaching [front page article](#) <sup>[1]</sup> in The New York Times documented many appalling transgressions committed by the industry. For example, tests of many store brands of herbal supplements that are sold at Walmart, Walgreens, Target and GNC revealed that these products contained none of the herb in question 80 percent of the time. And significant impurities were present with astonishing frequency and in disturbing amounts.

Even Dr. Pieter Cohen, of Harvard Medical School, who is an expert on supplement safety, who [we have quoted before](#) <sup>[2]</sup>, seemed shocked. He said, that the attorney general's test results were so extreme that he found them hard to accept.

Finally 20 years after the law that permitted this garbage to escape the aegis of the FDA action is being taken by New York State attorney general's office. Among other things, they have ordered all of these products removed from the shelves of the retailers in question.

What is especially disturbing, according to ACSH's Dr. Josh Bloom, is that These were supposed to be the best brands whatever that means. It makes me wonder what is coming out of a garage in Newark with a rusty sign saying Joe's Supplementz.

In today's Times, there is an op-ed by Timothy Egan that explains how this miscarriage of medical justice was allowed to happen. The bottom line is Orrin Hatch's obscene DSHEA bill that was passed in 1994. This is certainly correct, but it is nothing that hasn't been reported many times before.

We have written about this numerous times, including a [piece](#) <sup>[2]</sup> from October 2014. And Dr. Bloom has published a number of essays in various outlets, including [The American Spectator](#) <sup>[3]</sup>

(2012), [Medical Progress Today](#) [4] (2012), and [Science 2.0](#) [5] (2014).

Egan offers little new information, but it is still encouraging that this issue is being kept in the limelight.

While we re on the subject, today we give ACSH friend Dr. David Seres, the head of nutritional medicine at New York Presbyterian Hospital a hearty ACSH shoutout. Dr. Seres takes no prisoners in his new [CNN commentary](#) [6].

Among other things, Seres says, As a nutrition expert, I am horrified by the daily barrage of outrageous and unsubstantiated claims touting cures from everything from E. coli to Ebola. If you do a Web search on just about any disease, you will find carefully worded ads promoting unproven nutritional therapies. Worse, some of these can be harmful. For example, [people have suffered liver damage from green tea extract that is so severe that they have needed a liver transplant](#) [7]. And the frequency of harm from dietary supplements is on the rise.

There is much more. We encourage you to read his entire essay. If this doesn't scare you out of taking supplements, nothing will.

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**Links**

[1] <http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/02/03/sidebar-whats-in-those-supplements/>

[2] <http://acsh.org/2014/10/fda-recalls-end-adulterated-dietary-supplements/>

[3]

[http://www.linkedin.com/share?viewLink=&sid=s967462322&url=http%3A%2F%2Fspectator.org%2Farchives-is-a-drug-a-drug&urlhash=fBio&pk=nprofile-edit-success&pp=&poster=12297756&uid=5586412723127721984&trk=NUS\\_UNIU\\_SHARE-title](http://www.linkedin.com/share?viewLink=&sid=s967462322&url=http%3A%2F%2Fspectator.org%2Farchives-is-a-drug-a-drug&urlhash=fBio&pk=nprofile-edit-success&pp=&poster=12297756&uid=5586412723127721984&trk=NUS_UNIU_SHARE-title)

[4] <http://www.medicalprogresstoday.com/2012/07/manufacturing-purer-snake-oil.php>

[5] [http://www.science20.com/pfired\\_but\\_still\\_kicking/liver\\_let\\_die\\_gambling\\_with\\_supplements-133623](http://www.science20.com/pfired_but_still_kicking/liver_let_die_gambling_with_supplements-133623)

[6] <http://www.cnn.com/2015/02/05/opinion/seres-herbal-supplements/>

[7] [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/22/us/spike-in-harm-to-liver-is-tied-to-dietary-aids.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/22/us/spike-in-harm-to-liver-is-tied-to-dietary-aids.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)