**Attempted character assassination in US legacy media related to nominations of new health secretary and FDA commissioner**

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The US healthcare system is one of the worst in the world despite spending far more per capita than other high-income countries.1 Longevity is considerably shorter than in Europe, even for wealthy Americans with healthy behaviours, which is partly because of overdiag-nosis and overtreatment.2

In 1980, life expectancy in the USA was about the same as in comparable countries, but in 2022, the difference was over 4 years, and USA had lost nearly two decades of progress since 2004.3 The US population also suffers from massive over-weight, which is largely due to the widespread consumption of junk food and sugary drinks.

The administrative inefficiency is huge, with many middlemen, and there are very few family physicians even though a study that compared 3075 US counties found that every 20% increase in primary care physicians was associated with a 6% reduction in total mortality.4 The relative position of the United States on health indicators among OECD countries also worsened in the period where the proportion of specialists increased.

Between 2011 and 2017, Medicare and its beneficiaries could have saved $17.7 billion through substitution of 12 drugs with their racemic precursors. As the active substance is the same, the benefits and harms would also be expected to be the same.5

 It is well known that the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is malfunctioning and approves far too many drugs with little or no benefit but which increase mortality. If the FDA protected public health, which it is supposed to do, our prescription drugs would not be the major killer, ahead of cancer and heart disease, and psychiatric drugs would not be the third major killer.6 The drug deaths even seem to have increased, as judged by adverse events reports submitted to the FDA between 2006 and 2014.7

 It has been well documented that the FDA is corrupt.8 In 2009, nine FDA scientists wrote to President Obama about widespread corruption in the FDA at the highest levels, including several commissioners.9,10

The scientists were frustrated and outraged and gave many examples of the corruption, which they described as systemic and violating the law. They noted that there was an atmosphere at the FDA in which the honest employee fears the dishonest employee, and that senior officials had suppressed or altered scientific or technological findings and conclusions, had abused their power and authority, and had engaged in illegal retaliation against those who spoke out.

In 2012, it was revealed that FDA management had installed spyware on the computers of five scientists who had alerted the FDA to safety problems to no avail and therefore had informed the politicians.11

 FDA’s approval of many worthless, harmful, and ridiculously expensive drugs has recently been confirmed by the agency’s approval of drugs against dementia (e.g. at a cost of $32,000 a year per patient) based on poor research and experts with financial conflicts of interest, against the rules.12

**Nomination of Robert F Kennedy Jr. as upcoming health secretary**

When Trump nominated Robert F Kennedy Jr. as upcoming health secretary, mainstream US media were busy describing him as the country’s top anti-vaxxer. There was comparatively little about what his plans were even though his agenda of banning TV commercials for drugs could be the biggest advance for public health in America for decades should he succeed.

 I disagree with almost all of Kennedy’s stances on vaccines. Our best vaccines, including those against measles and polio, have saved millions of lives and still do. Smallpox was one of the biggest killers of all times, and the vaccine is highly effective. The WHO has described smallpox as the only human disease to be eradicated so far.13

Kennedy believes that the measles vaccine causes autism, a claim that has been solidly debunked in the most reliable cohort and case-control studies.14,15 This hypothesis was raised by Andrew Wakefield, one of the worst fraudsters in medicine in the last century, after he had published a study in *The* Lancet,16 which was retracted.17

Unfortunately, Wakefield enjoys celebrity status in some anti-vaxx communities in America.15 In January 2025, an attempt was made to resurrect the long-dead hypothesis that vaccines cause autism18 in a phony journal with an odd collection of anti-vaxxers, quacks, and fraudsters in its Editorial Board,19 but the study was fatally flawed.20,21

There are important vaccine issues I agree with Kennedy about, e.g. the lack of placebo in the control groups when vaccines are tested. The WHO has stated that using adjuvant or another vaccine as comparator instead of placebo makes it difficult to assess the harms of a vaccine, and that placebo can be used in trials of vaccines against diseases for which there are no existing vaccines.22

I also share Kennedy’s concern that the many childhood vaccinations in the USA could be harmful. I am aware of only two researchers who have studied this.23 They did several studies and found that nations that require more vaccines for their infants have higher mortality rates in small children. This is alarming and should lead to other studies as a matter of urgency.

Kennedy wants people to have access to reliable information about vaccines so that they can decide if they want to take a particular vaccine. This is much needed, as a lot of information about vaccines, also from health authorities, is misleading propaganda.15,24

Vaccine programmes have not taken into account the convincing research by Peter Aaby and Christine Stabell Benn who, in study after study, have shown that live attenuated vaccines decrease total mortality more than what can be predicted from their specific effect while non-live vaccines do the opposite, they increase total mortality.25

They have also shown that the sequence of vaccinations is important; that it is best to end with a live vaccine; and that the harms of non-live vaccines predominantly affect girls. Their vaccine research is so ground-breaking that it is on the list of milestones in *Nature*,26 which starts with the discovery of the smallpox vaccine.

Thus, as Kennedy said during the Senate hearings on 29 and 30 January 2025, we must ask critical questions of vaccines. On both days, Kenndy also mentioned my finding that our prescription drugs are the third leading cause of death.8,27,28 My more detailed analyses have shown that our drugs are THE leading cause of death in the United States.6

The Washington Post claimed that there is no research in support of Kennedy’s views that psychiatric drugs cause school shootings and that antidepressants are harder to quit than heroin.29 The relation between depression pills and violence, including school shootings, has been documented,30-33 and several psychiatrists have told me it is much easier to stop heroin than a depression drug because the withdrawal symptoms are more short-lived.

**Nomination of Dr Marty Makary as new FDA commissioner**

When Trump nominated Dr Marty Makary as new FDA commissioner in late November, the media went berserk. What they should have done was to inform the American public about the widespread corruption at the FDA and the harmful consequences for public health, patient survival, and the national economy.

 But my searches on the Internet after Makary’s nomination showed that several media attempted character assassination instead, and here are some examples.

 The headline in the message from Reuters was neutral: *Trump's FDA pick is surgeon and writer Martin Makary*.34 Reuters noted that, in his most recent book, Markary spoke out against "massive overtreatment" in the US and "an epidemic of inappropriate care." This is exactly why we need a person like him as FDA commissioner.

 But the headline in CBS News was: *Trump nominates Marty Makary, who opposed COVID vaccine mandates, to head FDA*.35

I am also against vaccine mandates15 and one of my reasons, which is shared by many others, including some authorities,15,36 is that mandates might increase opposition towards the most important vaccines we have, which are not the rather ineffective COVID-19 vaccines24 or the ineffective influenza vaccines,15 which were mandated in America.

The website of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is a treasure trove of misinformation, even worse than drug company websites.15 The CDC announces colossal effects of influenza vaccination without the slightest hint that these estimates come from highly unreliable research such as case-control studies.

The FDA is not any better. They wrote that “A lot of the illness and death caused by the influenza virus can be prevented by a yearly influenza vaccine.” It has never been shown that influenza vaccination decreases mortality in healthy people, and it is highly unlikely.

 The CBS News article stated that “Makary gained prominence on Fox News and other conservative outlets for his contrarian views during the COVID-19 pandemic. He questioned the need for masking.” CBS should be ashamed of themselves. Face masks don’t work and should never have been mandated.37,38 There is no need to mandate whole populations to dress as bank robbers.

 CBS stated that “though he was not opposed to the COVID-19 vaccine, Makary had con-cerns about vaccinations in young children.” My deputy director and I showed in a systema-tic review, which medical journals were not interested in publishing, that COVID-19 vaccina-tion of children is harmful.39

CBS stated that “Makary was part of a vocal group of physicians calling for greater em-phasis on herd immunity to stop the virus.” They did not say that Sweden agreed with this, kept the country open, and had one of the lowest excess mortalities in the world.40

NBC News said that “Makary has made some controversial statements in the past, par-ticularly about the pandemic. He said that the federal government was the ‘greatest perpe-trator’ of misinformation during the pandemic.”41

This is not controversial. The US government was surely one of the greatest perpetrators of misinformation. Among those that have claimed 100% efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccines are President Joe Biden, Anthony Fauci – presidential adviser - the FDA, Science Magazine, Reuters, CNN, US National Public Radio, The Hill, Sky News, Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca, and Johnson & Johnson.24

**Conclusions**

Kennedy, as I explained in an interview,42 Markary and Jay Bhattacharya, likely the new director of the National Institutes of Health, could do wonders together and make America much healthier than it currently is.

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