



ACSH

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Senior Fellow in Nutrition

Alex Berezow, Ph.D.
Senior Fellow of Biomedical Science

Julianna LeMieux, Ph.D.
Senior Fellow in Molecular Biology

Josh Bloom, Ph.D.
Director of Chemical and Pharmaceutical Sciences

Erik Lief
Senior News Editor

Charles Dinerstein, M.D., M.B.A., F.A.C.S.
Senior Medical Fellow

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(1943-2014)
(Years of Service to ACSH: 1978-2014)
Founder and President, ACSH

Fredrick J. Stare, M.D., Ph.D.
(1910-2002)
(Years of Service to ACSH: 1978-2002)
Founder, Harvard Department of Nutrition

Norman E. Borlaug, Ph.D.
(1914-2009)
(Years of Service to ACSH: 1978-2009)
Father of the "Green Revolution" Nobel Laureate



**AMERICAN COUNCIL
ON SCIENCE AND HEALTH**
Science. Not Hype.

110 East 42nd St, Suite 1300 • New York, New York 10017-8532
Tel. (212) 362-7044 • Fax (212) 362-4919
www.acsh.org • acsh@acsh.org



INTRODUCING THE AMERICAN
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SCIENCE. NOT HYPE.



The mission of the American Council on Science and Health is to ensure that peer-reviewed, evidenced-based science reaches both the public and the decision makers and regulators who make public policy. As the Wall Street Journal phrased it, "ACSH knows the difference between a health scare and a health threat."

What is the American Council on Science and Health?

The American Council on Science and Health was founded in 1978 as a national consumer-education consortium that specializes in analyzing, discussing, and reporting on science issues in the fields of medicine, food, chemicals and technological innovation as it relates to human health.

ACSH's nucleus is a board of more than 350 authorities—physicians, scientists, and policy experts—representing a broad spectrum of disciplines, who are called upon to review all of ACSH's prospective publications and position papers, and regularly advise us about key issues within their fields of expertise.

The bottom line: We share the values of scientifically literate Americans, and so we fight for the public and consumers against unscientific beliefs promoted by merchants of fear and doubt.

ACSH is an independent, not-for-profit, tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) organization. All contributions are tax-deductible as provided by law.

What is ACSH's primary goal?

ACSH's primary aim is to help American consumers recognize the difference between significant health hazards and hypothetical, trivial, and intentionally exaggerated health scares. We further ensure that individual health decisions and public health policies are based on sound scientific evidence rather than lobbying, ideology or outright quackery

What is ACSH'S most important need?

Money for our outreach programs is what keeps quality information available free to all. Promoting fear and doubt is easy, anyone can do it, but well-respected scientists and doctors who examine evidence thoroughly are expensive. We need the resources to effectively counteract the claims of anti-science activists. Our programs battle back against highly influential and very well funded individuals and organizations trying to win a war against America's science future by using phony studies, sympathetic media outlets, and expensive marketing blitzes to shape regulatory policy and raise money claiming legislative victories. These "victories" can have a profound and destructive impact on this country.

Who funds ACSH?

ACSH is funded primarily by individual donors, but we also receive unrestricted grants from foundations, trade associations, and corporations. We receive no government funding.

Do ACSH's funders influence its policies?

No. ACSH is an independent organization whose conclusions stem from, and are consistent with, mainstream scientific findings. ACSH accepts contributions on a "no-strings-attached" basis. We determine our positions and conclusions based on the weight of evidence, we stick to the truth and put science first—that's been our legacy since our founding in 1978 and it remains the reason we exist today.

How does ACSH reach policy makers?

ACSH's findings are conveyed in multiple ways. We publish peer-reviewed books, monographs and policy papers, we are extensively published in newspapers, national magazines, and popular websites, we appear on TV and radio programs, and we produce our own videos. We also have a daily Dispatch

newsletter where we cover recent events. We have tens of thousands of followers on Facebook and our exclusive agreement with Science 2.0 gives us an audience of over 1,000,000 science readers per month. We also testify directly before legislators, agencies and public health leaders as needed.

Does ACSH take strong positions on public health policies?

Yes. ACSH was among the earliest organizations to warn the public about cigarette smoking and to lobby for seat belt use. When the Natural Resources Defense Council duped 60 minutes into promoting the idea that alar on apples was a health concern, ACSH showed their claims to be false and the organization was commended by Surgeon General Dr. C. Everett Koop for revealing their hoax. We have been the national leader in educating the American public, the media, and policymakers about the dire health consequences of cigarette smoking—the nation's top preventable killer. ACSH continuously deals with hot button issues, such as the safety of genetically modified foods, the phony health scares surrounding hydraulic fracturing (fracking), vaccine scares, and chemophobia.

What kinds of health misinformation has ACSH debunked?

Scaring people about health in order to raise money is a time-honored technique and some myths have come and gone, only to be replaced by new ones. Here are some examples of recent misinformation that we have debunked:

- **Genetically Modified (GM) Crops And Food Technology**

Radical environmental groups such as Greenpeace have opposed a scientific approach to agriculture for decades, and continue to do so, despite the fact that GMO foods have fed millions of people and billions of animals without any health issue. One crop—called Golden Rice—could prevent millions of deaths and cases of blindness by providing a source of vitamin A to the huge number of poor people deficient in it. Food is a vital issue frequently and we have led the nation in taking a pro-science approach to making sure that America continues to set the standard for how to feed a rapidly growing planet.

- **Vaccinations and Autism**

A study published by Andrew Wakefield in The Lancet in 1998 (since retracted) set off a firestorm of concern about the MMR vaccine and the development of autism in children. Though we led in refuting those claims, our work is not done yet. We have seen outbreaks of infectious diseases, such as measles and whooping cough, which were rare in the United States two decades ago.

- **Cigarette smoking harm reduction and cessation**

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the US. Tobacco harm reduction is the practice of encouraging smokers to use less harmful products when they cannot quit cold turkey. These products deliver nicotine—the addictive chemical in cigarettes—in forms that eliminates the toxic chemicals that are released with inhalation of cigarette smoke. Cessation aids include electronic cigarettes, nicotine gum, patches and lozenges, and smokeless tobacco products. We have written documents and testified at the White House on the need to make sure that all smoking cessation and harm reduction tools remain available, while promoting responsible regulation to ensure public safety.

- **Hydraulic Fracturing**

Our country is sitting on vast reserves of natural gas—the cleanest burning of all fuels. A technique called hydraulic fracturing (fracking) has become popular to harvest this natural gas, providing the US with the potential for energy independence and cutting down on pollution without regulation. Anti-science activists who once embraced natural gas have now turned on it and have sought to scare people into believing the process pollutes our air and water despite evidence showing otherwise. ACSH has stood fast against this “politicization of science” and with your support we will continue to do so.

- **Chemophobia and Cancer**

Chemicals, natural and synthetic, are ubiquitous in modern life, and have been forever. Although any chemical can be harmful at a sufficiently high dose, there is a manufactured narrative that they are just as harmful at miniscule doses. Related to this is another chemophobia fallacy: that chemicals accumulate in our bodies and they are responsible for increasing cancer. ACSH takes a leading role in explaining why this

is incorrect, that cancer rates have instead been declining over the past three decades, and that it is simply the case that more chemicals can be detected now because modern analytical techniques are incredibly sensitive. Chemicals that could not even be measured in the past can now be detected. However, being detectable is now equated with being harmful by anti-science groups in the environmental community. We constantly battle the enormous amount of false information that is disseminated in this area.

How rigorous is ACSH's peer review process?

Senior staff members or independent scientists draft prospective position papers. Our work then undergoes rigorous peer review by experts in that field. This process is similar to that used by America's most prestigious scientific and medical journals and often superior to many journals.

What are ACSH's most important activities?

- Clarifying the difference between health scares and health threats, using our scientific panels and peer-review process
- Producing peer-reviewed documents using a trusted panel of hundreds of scientific advisors
- Science and health outreach in newspapers, journals, magazine and websites
- Appearing on television, radio and online interviews and in debates
- Meeting with policy makers to advocate for evidence-based decision-making
- Doing regular outreach on current topics with our daily Dispatch newsletter

What distinguishes ACSH from other health organizations?

Unlike advocacy groups that misrepresent science and distort health priorities, ACSH has produced and disseminated reliable, scientifically-sound peer-reviewed opinions on current health issues since 1978 and, when needed, debunking scares and groundless fads. Our mission is to champion the primacy of American science and technology.

What types of issues do we focus on?

ACSH covers wide-ranging contemporary health issues. These include:



Medicine

- Quackery
- Alternative medicine
- Cancer
- Obesity and diabetes
- Medical screening and disease prevention
- Pharmaceuticals (new drugs, antibiotic resistance and generic drug shortages)
- Biotechnology (especially stem cell research)

Nutrition and food safety

- Genetically modified foods, biotechnology agriculture
- Food safety, processing and technology
- Organic farming
- Dietary supplements

False Scares

- Vaccines
- Pesticides, and herbicides
- Energy production
- Chemophobia
- Environmental group scare tactics: chemicals, GM foods
- False cancer scares

Other public health issues

- Ending cigarette smoking
- Controlling infectious diseases
- Drug Abuse
- Alcohol risks and benefits
- Public safety