



The Goose That Laid The Golden Egg: Accutane - the truth that had to be told

Doug Bremner

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In 2001 Hoffmann-La Roche's drug Accutane was selling in its billions worldwide as a treatment for acne. For those who suffered from extreme scarring acne, it was something of a miraculous treatment, however evidence started to mount that for others it was a death sentence. Over the next few years it was estimated that between 300 and 3,000 young people being prescribed Accutane since its launch had committed suicide or killed others. In 2001 the father of young man in Ireland who had committed suicide approached Dr. Doug Bremner as Professor of Psychiatry & Radiology at Emory University to see if he could find a causal link between the drug and depression. His findings were that the drug did have an effect on the brain likely to cause acute depression in some patients, which was not surprising as it is a molecular cousin of Vitamin A which is known to cause depression in excessive quantities. One might think that Hoffmann-La Roche would have welcomed these findings. After all, no-one was doubting that Accutane was an extremely effective remedy in many cases, it was just that it appeared to have lethal side-effects in others. You might like to think again on that one. 'The Goose That Laid The Golden Egg' is the account of what Hoffmann-La Roche did next, which was to prosecute a determined, energetic and vindictive campaign against Dr. Bremner designed to suppress his findings and destroy his career and livelihood. Nonetheless, Dr. Bremner persisted and Hoffmann La-Roche have since withdrawn Accutane from the US market, not only for its potentially depressive effects, but also for the likelihood of its causing birth defects and stunting growth. From the pen of the author of 'Before You Take That Pill: Why the Drug Industry May Be Bad for Your Health: Risks and Side Effects You Won't Find on the Label of Commonly Prescribed Drugs, Vitamins, and Supplements', this is a truly riveting and emotional read detailing just what it costs to take on the full might of one of the largest corporations in the world when you have never claimed to be a saint and have no desire to become a martyr.

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