

Profit before People: Medical Madoff exposed

In March 2009, investigations run by the state medical institute in Springfield, Massachusetts (USA), revealed that during the last 12 years an anaesthesiologist from the centre, Scott Reuben, totally fabricated results of over 21 clinical trials without getting caught!

Reuben was working on a new postoperative painkiller as an alternative to the use of addictive drugs such as morphine, and results of the studies he published were all in favour of the use of those new drugs made by Pfizer and Merck (a company known for attempting to discredit or 'neutralise' doctors who were critical of their practices). Having presented positive conclusions in those studies, Reuben pushed for the use of those drugs on patients, and informed the sale of billions of dollars worth of those drugs, putting patients at risk. When examining the release and the use of new drugs, control bodies look at the balance between positive and negative outcomes to see if the positive effect of the drug is worth the drug side effects. In this case, Reuben, by presenting fake results demonstrating the drug is beneficial, pushed in favour of the drug's use.

It could have been just one of those examples of academics frauds that are raised time to time and exist thanks to the lack of control by

publishers and universities if Scott Reuben was not getting money from Pfizer!! Reuben alongside his job in the Baystate Medical Center was getting a salary from Pfizer as a member the company speaker's bureau as well as received 5 research grants from the same company...

This is not to say that this Reuben, nicknamed 'Medical Madoff' (in reference to Bernie Madoff, the billionaire fraudster), was the only person implicated in this falsification of data, or that blame should be individualised, but why did no one ever challenge his results?

It has been shown that research published on the effect of a drug and sponsored by the drug manufacturer tend to be statistically more in favour of the drug than public/independent founded research. So how someone that has never published any clinical work with negative conclusions, and is getting paid by one of the drug manufacturers can published works for ten years without his results being investigated is astonishing! This may have led to the prescription of potentially dangerous drugs to millions!

As well it emerged this year that Elsevier, a big-name academic publisher, has SIX industry-sponsored medical journals, all essentially long adverts, in the form of reprints of positive articles that flatter the

pharmaceutical companies that pay for the journals. Essentially, these are fake journals, claiming to be objective and interested only in the evidence-base of the research contained, but in actuality, controlled directly by pharmaceutical companies, and containing nothing more than glorified drug adverts.

Even in the legit mainstream journals, industry-funded studies are much more likely to get into the biggest, most influential journals than public/independent research studies – such journals have higher 'impact-factors', which means they are cited more often thus influence their fields more.

Bosses and governments regularly manipulate the results of research, or hide results when it doesn't suit their drive for profit or ideological motivations. Last month it emerged that Bush's government had hidden satellite images of polar ice sheets from July 2006 and July 2007 showing the retreating ice during the summer, due to human-influenced climate change.

Science and medicine, as with any other industries, under capitalism can never meet the needs of the working class. Whether it's governments manipulating climate change data to protect oil interests, or pharmaceuticals pimping their own brand of drugs without regard to the potential risks to people, the working class have to pay one way or another. While workers are not in control of these industries, they will always be subject to the interests of bosses who put profit before people.

Choccy and Frankie

Nortel: Workers Fighting Back

Protests are ongoing in support of the 87 workers sacked with no redundancies at the Nortel plant in Newtownabbey last March.

Workers and protestors gathered outside the Bedford Street offices of Nortel's administrators, Ernst & Young, in Belfast on the 6th of August. Members of Organise! joined the sacked workers as they unfurled banners and handed out leaflets to shoppers and workers in central Belfast.

The mood of the protest was upbeat, with foghorns booming, but there anger at the way they have been treated by their former Nortel bosses was palpable. Nortel, is a multinational telecommunications equipment manufacturer and has its international headquarters in Toronto, Canada. In January 2009, the company filed for protection

from creditors in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, in order to restructure its financial obligations and debt. Ernst & Young are now effectively running Nortel's UK operation.

On 30 March, bosses at the Monkstown plant assembled at short notice and sacked 87 employees, with no redundancies. Workers at the protest claim that Nortel violated agreements with the union Unite, of which many of the workforce were members.

Today's protestors described how there had been no consultation, and no notice concerning the job cuts. The workers have stated that Nortel broke employment laws by not giving them the statutory 90 days consultation before making redundancies. Administrators Ernst & Young, claim that Nortel

has acted within the law while Nortel executives received \$43 million in bonuses according to the Nortel protestors.

Sacked former Nortel workers in France, Spain, and Germany had received their redundancy packages, and the Nortel workers in Belfast today are fighting for theirs. They aim to continue their protests at both Ernst & Young in Belfast, and at the Nortel plant outside Belfast. The sacked UK workers have set up an information site about their fight against Nortel

<http://www.shameonyounortel.co.uk/>



Water Charges Will Be Met With Mass Civil Disobedience



The anti-water charges We Won't Pay Campaign has responded to speculation that water charges may be introduced next year by warning the Northern Ireland Executive that they "will be met with mass civil disobedience if water charges are imposed on people."

Gary Mulcahy, spokesperson for the anti-water charges campaign added "There is no mandate to introduce water charges. It would be totally undemocratic to impose this tap tax on households. At the last Assembly elections the politicians were left in no doubt that people are strongly opposed to water charges.

"The Executive is paying millions of taxpayers money to private companies which have taken over important parts of the water service. This supply should be cut off and the creeping privatisation of the service should be reversed by terminating the Alpha and Omega PPP contracts. This would save millions and could be invested into the service instead of benefiting big business.

"People are already struggling to pay existing bills without having to worry about a new water bill. It is completely unacceptable for the Executive to impose this additional charge on people, especially since we already pay for water.

"If the Executive announces that water charges are to be introduced, we will determinedly campaign in the communities to build an organised 'We Won't Pay' boycott of these charges."

www.wewontpaycampaign.com