800,000 Deaths from Drugs:
A Special Interview with Dr. Andrew Saul

By Dr. Joseph Mercola

DM: Dr. Joseph Mercola

AS: Dr. Andrew Saul

DM: How is it possible that a misinformation could kill nearly a million people from inappropriately prescribed drugs? This is Dr. Mercola, helping you take control of your health. I’m joined today by Dr. Andrew Saul, who is going to help us delve into the answer to this question. Welcome and thank you for joining us today.

AS: I’m glad to be here.

DM: It is just extraordinary. I just nearly fell out of my chair when I read this study that in brief summary, the... This is in Europe, which has a much larger population than the US collectively. They’re about 740 million. The results of the study are just restricted to Europe, but clearly the implications are appropriate also for the US. The numbers aren’t just as big, but they appear to have killed 800,000 people by inappropriately prescribing beta blockers for patients in non-cardiac surgery. I mean, it’s just almost unimaginable that they can get away with it. But then, of course, they tried to cover it up. We’ll get into the details. I’m wondering what your take is on this study.

AS: Well, Dr. Abram Hoffer said for years and years that, “Drugs make a well person sick. Why would they make a sick person well?” since he was advocating the use of niacin to help with heart disease problems. This was picked up by William Parsons at the Mayo Clinic years later. There has always been an alternative. The best alternative is not really the alternative at all – it’s the common-sense way to deal with these heart problems. That is to recognize that you need to exercise. You need to eat whole foods. You need to get rid of sugar. You need to start juicing. You need to take supplements. None of this is being presented to the public as a solution.

In fact, you know all too well, as does your readership, that for the last year or two there’s been a really intense effort to try to suggest that vitamins are hurting people. Now, they’ve gone out of their way to try to find evidence that vitamins might possibly be causing deaths. The most recent report by the American Association of Poison Control Centers shows there are no deaths once again from vitamins. One was alleged to some B vitamin, but they couldn’t even specify it. Obviously, they didn’t have anything on it. At the same time, we’re having tens, even hundreds, of thousands of people dying from drugs that most doctors would consider to be garden-variety therapy.

There’s a better answer. There always has been a better answer. Really, drugs are kind of the alternative. They’re the Johnny-come-lately. What on Earth did we do until we came up with these drugs in the last 20, 30, or 40 years? How did civilization ever make it? How do animals manage without beta blockers? How do they manage without statins? How do they manage without all the interventions that pharmaceutical medicine makes so much money off of? The answer is that the natural solution has always been the best. It’s always been in front of us. But now the point is being driven home.
If we’re seeing the deaths of 800,000 people in Europe, this is a huge, huge issue. You are absolutely right to flag the public’s attention to this. There’s a lot of good advice on your website to help people really get control with their health and to get off this drug-death, drug-side effect, drug-death, drug-side effect spiral.

**DM:** It’s just so extraordinary. I mean, it’s not tens of thousands; it’s more than hundreds of thousands, because this was for one group of drugs, beta blockers, in Europe alone. If you extrapolate those numbers to the US, you’re looking at probably about half of those deaths. That’s another 400,000, well over a million. And that’s only over a five-year period.

But one of the points that I found most extraordinary is that the majority of those deaths in Europe actually occurred after they found this out. It took them years to change the recommendation. I mean, let’s just talk about turning the Titanic. Turning the Titanic or a large ship is a challenge. But here we’ve got tens, hundreds, of thousands of people dying for their inability to act quickly. It’s just almost reprehensible negligence on their part. They can get away with this.

I thank you for bringing up the point that there are obviously solutions and that there’s been this massive effort from certain legislators and physicians to derail supplements. You are the leader in showing us that they’re essentially harmless – no deaths at all. Here we have one group of drugs in Europe alone causing 800,000 deaths over five years.

**AS:** Right.

**DM:** It’s just incredible.

**AS:** To put that in perspective, that is considerably more than all of the dead in the United States Civil War (Union and Confederate), including deaths by disease as well as battle. Eight hundred thousand people dead is approaching a number that the health nuts have been talking about for a while.

There was an article and a book called *Death by Modern Medicine* that came out around 10 years ago. Everybody thought, “Ho, ho, ho, this is a wild exaggeration.” They’re claiming that at least 300,000 or possibly as many as 800,000 people a year die of medical interventions, including the ones that are done according to the book, the ones that are properly prescribed and taken as directed.

Now, there was a huge outcry saying that these authors were exaggerating. There is no way that modern medicine was killing that many. Well, it is. Now we can say with a fair amount of certainty that in the United States, modern medicine techniques are killing so many people that it’s in the top 10 causes of death. By some estimates, it’s in the top five, and by some limited estimates, it’s actually the number one killer of Americans every year.

Here we are, we’re killing off our own countrymen in America, and we’re killing off our friends in Europe as well. It’s getting to the point where the public, I think, is going to just pull back. They’re not even going to believe that number because it’s so large. But this is a global issue, and there is a global solution. There is no monotherapy for heart disease. It is a lifestyle change. That lifestyle change is individual. It’s doable, it’s old-fashioned, and it works. Get rid of sugar, exercise, eat whole, unprocessed foods, drink vegetable juices, take your vitamins, and you’re going to live longer.

There have been lots of studies that show that people who take supplements have less cardiovascular disease. What have you been told for the last year or two? In the last 39 years that I’ve been doing this, the public has been told, “We need more study on those vitamins. We’ve got to have tighter research controls.” Well, look at the research controls they had on their beta blockers. This is outright fraud. This is fraud and murder. People went to the gallows in Nuremberg for doing what the drug industry is doing in Europe.
DM: Yes. This should clearly be on the front page of most every major periodical – magazines and newspapers – but it was buried. We found this report buried in the back pages of Forbes magazine. Fortunately, there is an editor or a writer at Forbes who’s been following this case very closely, which is why he picked up on it. But interestingly, when the details came out in the European Heart Journal and they were published, they withdrew the paper supposedly because of the implications of the assertions. Normally, this type of article is not peer-reviewed, but they said, “Oh, we got to pull it [out] and get it peer-reviewed.” Who knows if they’ll ever put it back in the journal?

AS: An interesting thing about that: the study authors commented. They basically said we didn’t really draw wild conclusions; all we did was multiply three numbers. And you know, peer review is funny.

We’re back to Abram Hoffer again, my mentor for years. Dr. Abram Hoffer was very much opposed to peer review. He said, “That’s a really good way to stamp out innovation and maintain the status quo.” Linus Pauling also had a rather dim view of peer review. There are quite a few scientists who have come out and said, “Look, why don’t we do what works? Why don’t we take a look at what doctors do when they get results? Let’s all do it.” This is exactly what Dr. Hoffer said. “Where are the good ol’ days of medicine,” he said, “when honest physicians reported what they saw, and other doctors followed their example?”

DM: I couldn’t agree more. That clearly seems to be the way that you should pattern your treatments: based on successful interventions. That’s what they seek to do. But unfortunately, the entire system has been perverted. It’s probably the best description. It’s twisted and manipulated by the industries that fund most of these studies and [by] the government. The government is lobbied by the drug companies. They’re able to get these studies published and make these types of recommendations and interventions that kill people. I mean, millions of people.

To me, one of the most extraordinary components of this is if it challenges the whole basis of scientific medicine. I mean, how can you trust it when just one of these studies kills a million people?

AS: Right.

DM: It just challenges the whole basic foundation of what they’re doing.

AS: It does. It gets even more disturbing when we take a look at the regulators who are supposed to be running interference on this on behalf of the public. The fox definitely is in charge of the hen house. The FDA is a perfect example. The FDA has all kinds of people with drug industry ties either before or after they’re there and very possible while they’re there. The FDA basically says to the drug companies, “Now, you do the research and you submit the study showing that it’s safe.” Oh, now, there’s a good idea. Gee.

DM: Yeah, and the total implication that they don’t state directly, the indirect implication, is, “If you happen to do a study that doesn’t support your claims, we’ll just throw that away. Don’t show it to us. We don’t need to see that.”

AS: Right. In case people think that Saul and Mercola are going off on this again, it’s very important that we point out that Dr. Angell, who was editor-in-chief of the New England Journal of Medicine, wrote a book called The Truth About the Drug Companies. She absolutely ripped into them. This is the editor-in-chief of the New England Journal of Medicine. [It’s] difficult to dismiss her. And quite frankly, she’s not particularly keen on alternative or natural healing. For her to rip into the drug companies was particularly powerful.
She went out of her way to point out how these studies are rigged. They are fraudulent. They are driven by money. The drug industry controls medical education, medical research, medical practice, and medical laws. We’ve been saying this for years and it has to be said again: the emperor has no clothes. To the public: there’s a way out. Question authority (that was my favorite button during the hippie ‘60s). Question authority. Always question authority. Linus Pauling said that. He said, “If there will be some scientists who won a prize and who has gray hair, telling you what to do, and he said say, “no,” listen politely, consider what he says, look into it, and decide for yourself.

This is what we have to do more than ever. As we move toward national healthcare of some sort in the United States, it’s really important that we don’t let the FDA and the pharmaceutical industry dictate to our representatives and senators what’s going to be done. I think that is what is happening right now unless we stand up and walk. It’s time to do it.

DM: I always like to end on a positive note and reframe things positively. To me, the most powerful lesson from this serious tragedy… I mean, we’re talking 800,000 people dying unnecessarily and prematurely. Obviously, we’re all going to die. But they die prematurely without any reason other than this flawed study. That’s just one. We could spend hours going through all the rest of them, and read Dr. Angell’s book that go into more philosophical components.

But the message here is that you can’t trust this system. This is a powerful example of that. You’ve got to develop your own philosophy, your own ability to make this discernment, because this is not going to be the first. Probably this, but when you hear of that… This week, there are going to be more announcements of these medical studies, these new breakthroughs. If it violates what you know to be true in your own heart, in your own common-sense wisdom, which is obviously not very common, you have to question it, not only you but those that you love – your friends and your family.

If they start hearing it from a number of people, we could start to make a difference. As we said, this material is not going to be announced on your news channel. It’s just not. It’s suppressed. Even though it’s true and it’s real, they’re not going to let you know about it. You have to find additional resources to form your basis and opinion, and let all the people know. If we get a critical mass, we can change the system.

I’m not too hopeful about changing it through the legislative process because it’s so manipulated. It’s so twisted. It’s so lobbied. The system is so fatally broken that I don’t know if it’s ever possible to fix without a complete reset.

AS: Abraham Lincoln was right, and still is: “You can fool some of the people all of the time and all of the people some of the time, but you can’t fool all of the people all of the time.” There are more of us than there are of them.

DM: Yes.

AS: There are more people taking vitamins now than that don’t. Seventy-five percent of physicians take vitamins every day. We’re winning. We’re winning. The center has shifted. The drug industry has more money but we have more votes. If we are to move ahead on this, we’re going to have to claim our power. Voting with your dollars is one of the great ways to do it. Just say “no” to drugs. Say, “No, I’m not going to take the beta blocker. No, I’m not going to take the statin. No, I’m not going to take the antibiotic that you’re giving me to prevent an infection. I’m not dumb.”

I know I’m not going to do it. I raised my kids all the way into college. They never had a single antibiotic – not one dose, not ever. That’s because we used other methods – natural diet, mostly a plant-based diet, vegetable juices, and lots of vitamin C. We did all the things that natural health physicians taught us over the decades. You know something? It works!
DM: Yes. The benefit is that you don’t get these side effects. You don’t get these chronic degenerative diseases. You don’t die prematurely.

AS: Let’s just stay there for a minute. You don’t die prematurely. That’s big. This is important. This is not little trivial stuff; this is life and death for your uncle, your aunt, your grandmother, your children, your brother, and your sister. This is something we have to do right now. Say “no” to drugs. This is good advice. This is within our power. If everybody says “no” to the drug, things are going to shift.

DM: Yeah. That recommendation is not set in stone. It’s not an absolute. Obviously, there are certain conditions where it may be appropriate. But those are clearly the exception. My guess is far under five percent. Thank God they’re available. Certain pain killers for one, if used appropriately.…

AS: Yes.

DM: For acute traumas make a big difference. If you have a life-threatening infection as a result of a trauma, clearly go on antibiotics. But that’s the exception. That is far less than five percent. Otherwise, your recommendation is clearly the best strategy to not die prematurely, especially in conjunction when it’s applied to these lifestyle changes.

AS: Oddly enough, the fewer drugs you use, the better the drugs will work if you need them.

DM: Yeah.

AS: If you really need an antibiotic, you’re the best patient if you haven’t had one in 10 or 15 years. If you really needed some kind of antidepressant or anti-anxiety drug, it would be better if you hadn’t been taking it, if you just needed it temporarily. The people, who are on long-term medications, say, for heart disease, it’s never one medication; it’s several medications. If there were a drug cure for heart disease, the heart disease deaths would be going down rather noticeably. They’re kind of not. If there was a cure for cancer, we would have heard about it. [What] all of this side effect-rich, profit-rich business is doing is perpetuating itself. It’s not healthcare; it’s disease care or it’s bank account care.

We can actually improve our health. You can – by changing your lifestyle and your diet – greatly reduce, tremendously reduce, your problems of heart disease. As an example, when my blood pressure went up and I had to take my own advice (which is a bummer, of course), I realized, “I’m not going to take this medication. Woho! What? My pressure’s gone up.” I’ve gone on to juices, fasting, supplements, and whole foods diet more thoroughly than I had. The result was the diastolic went down to 18 points. There are not a whole lot of drugs that will do that.

DM: No. It makes a huge difference. Just to clear up a point, too. We’re probably preaching to the choir for most of the people listening to this. But the average person, the average adult, in the US is taking not one, not two, not three, not five, not six drugs a day, but 11 drugs a day unless they’re over 65. And then the number goes up to 31.

AS: Right.

DM: It’s insane. I mean, this is just unbelievable insanity that they’ve allowed this to perpetuate. It’s very clever and sophisticated marketing to convince such a large portion of the population to engage in this behavior. But they have. You don’t have to fall into this trap. You can take responsibility of your own health. You can take control of your health and make the choice to avoid drugs in almost every case.

AS: You really can. “Almost every case” is a very fair statement, as you pointed out earlier. If you need the medical care, that’s wonderful. But literally, as you correctly said, 95 percent of the time, you can do a better job yourself. You really can.
DM: Yeah. All right. Well, I think that wraps it up for us in really sort of highlighting the importance of this study and how it can hopefully motivate and inspire you and your family and your friends to engage in an even more aggressive commitment to change your lifestyle, so that you don’t have to die prematurely from these drugs. All right. Thank you for joining us.

AS: I’m glad to do it.