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Originally published October 5 2010

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Exposed: Wikipedia Holds Bias against Natural Health

by Carolanne Wright

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(NaturalNews) In an article by the watchdog group Alliance for Natural Health (ANH), Wikipedia entries for alternative and natural medicine are shown to consistently have severe censorship, misinformation, and vandalism. Since Wikipedia is an extremely popular reference site on the internet with over 16 million articles, this bias towards conventional medicine negatively affects the accessibility of accurate natural health information.

Wikipedia is an on-line international collaboration of volunteers who post, edit, and research a variety of topics. According to Wikipedia's Five Pillars, "articles should strive for a neutrality, cite verifiable, authoritative sources, and honor multiple points of view." Issues arise when solid, referenced information conflicts with another perspective and is edited mercilessly or deleted. Contributors have little or no accountability and can post, edit, or vandalize an entry anonymously or even under a false "expert" alias. This was seen when a prominent Wikipedia contributor was discovered to be a 24-year-old drop out posing as a tenured college professor.

Natural and alternative medicine articles appear to be particularly vulnerable to partisan misinformation on Wikipedia. According to ANH, a few of these abuses are seen in the following instances:

A libelous article on Dr. Julian Whitaker was flagged in December 2007 due to neutrality issues, yet the case still has yet to be resolved.

Supportive, science based information on Orthomolecular Medicine is repeatedly edited and replaced with critical opinions.

Misinformation under the Nutritionist entry implies that ADA-registered dietitians are the only experts. There is more information about dietitians in the article than nutritionists who are supposed to be the subject of the article.

Richard Dawkins, an evolutionary biologist, is quoted on Wikipedia, saying alternative medicine is a "set of practices which cannot be tested, refuse to be tested, or consistently fails test," as well as "if a technique is demonstrated effective in properly performed trials, it ceases to be alternative and simply becomes medicine."

Larry Sanger, cofounder of Wikipedia, left the organization due to concerns about its integrity. He states: "In some fields and some topics, there are groups who 'squat' on articles and insist on making them reflect their own specific biases. There is no credible mechanism to approve versions of articles. Vandalism, once a minor annoyance, has become a major headache-made possible because the community allows anonymous contribution. Many experts have been driven away because know-nothings

insist on ruining their articles."

Currently, there are several alternatives to Wikipedia for credible information. Two examples are Citizendium and Wiki4CAM, the Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) Encyclopedia.

As noted by ANH, Wikipedia is an incredible and powerful force on the internet; therefore, the spread of misinformation regarding natural and alternative medicine is of particular concern for the health and wellness community.

Sources for this article:

<http://www.anh-usa.org/wikipedia's-...>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikiped...>

<http://en.citizendium.org/wiki/CZ:W...>

About the author

Carolanne enthusiastically believes if we want to see change in the world, we need to be the change. As a nutritionist, natural foods chef, and wellness coach, Carolanne has encouraged others to embrace a healthy lifestyle of organic living, gratefulness, and joyful orientation for over 13 years. Through her website www.Thrive-Living.com she looks forward to connecting with other like-minded people from around the world who share a similar vision.

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