



IN THE RYE FIELDS: Børge Eliassen is the head of the consumer organization, Free Health Choices. He is very critical of the restrictive policy that leads to natural remedies

106,000 die in US every year. From correctly prescribed and administered medicines. Can natural remedies be an alternative?

Health

Natural remedies

"Health-conscious people have been almost criminalized for actively taking care of their health with natural products," according to Børge Eliassen.

He heads up the consumer association Free Health Choices (FHV), and points out that the Norwegian regulations are particularly strict.

"The rules for what we can take as supplements are getting stricter all the time. This is regulated particularly strictly through the Medicines Act in Norway," says Eliassen. He says that several thousand Norwegian are sneaking over to Sweden for health supplements that help treat and prevent sickness.

These supplements are not sold legally in Norway.

"It is certainly an alien thought that nature is good for us. Many doctors think that nature has nothing to offer," he says.

Figures from the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) show that 106,000 US residents died as a result of taking approved medicines in 1998.

"There is however not one single death registered from the use of natural remedies and health food supplements in Norway," says Mat&Helse specialist editor, Dag Viljen Poleszynski.

The battle for our health

In his PhD thesis he shows that folk medicine had a dominant position in the Nordic countries until about 150 years ago

"Traditional knowledge is based on many hundred or even many thousands of clinical experiences. Especially herbal medicine is well documented," says Poleszynski.

He claims that synthetic pharmaceuticals only alleviate symptoms and produce unwanted side effects, while natural (non-synthetic) substances can often remove the cause of a disease.

"Why is such medicine not more prevalent?"

"Natural substances like vitamins, minerals, trace elements and enzymes cannot be patented. So they do not provide the same opportunities for profit as monopolistic competition of patented compounds," says the nutritionist.

Harald Hoel has the lung disease COPD. Through many years he used expensive medication. That didn't help.

Then he came across the product Oralmat, which consists of an extract of germinating rye sprouts at a certain stage in the growth. Now he no longer suffers from coughing fits and throwing up.

"For three years and four months, I slept sitting up, because I was almost choking if I lay down. That problem disappeared when I started using the natural remedy. My lung capacity has increased by one liter.

Traditional knowledge is based on many hundred or even many thousands of years of clinical experience. Herbal medicine is especially well documented.

Dag Viljen Poleszynski

"I have tried to stop using Oralmat, but I fill up with mucus when I do.

The product is no longer legally sold in Norway, so he gets it sent over from England. More than 1000 Norwegians are using the product, according to Hoel.

"Many thousands of people have called me. My son and my daughter got rid of their asthma from using the product. My son now attends singing lessons and goes cycling for up to thirty kilometres. He was cured in five weeks.

Together with a doctor and a researcher, Hoel gave a talk to the Norwegian Heart and Lung Patient Organization (NHL) in Trondheim. He covered all his own expenses in connection with the talk. Many people contacted LHL and asked for more talks. The organisation put their foot down.

"Media overruled it," claims Hoel. He contacted Sylvia Brustad, then Erna Solberg, then Siv Jensen. Every time he was told that this was something they wanted to look at closer. But he didn't hear any more.

Product developer Lars Klette is hired by hospitals in many countries in the Far East to help treat people with lung disease.

"It is just too bad that he gets turned away here because of financial interests," says Hoel.

He wants to gather the users of the product for action, but he is afraid of the pharmaceutical industry. He is not sure that he dares.

"The whole bunch at the Norwegian Medicines Agency should be put in prison," says Lars Klette.

"People get directly misleading information about dangerous chemicals. In the past drugs were only used when other things didn't help. Now pills are used for everything and anything.

The whole bunch at the Norwegian Medicines Agency should be put in prison!

Product developer
Lars Klette

Nobel price winner Linus Pauling claimed that large doses of vitamin C could cure cancer. This was rejected by the medical establishment on a methodically incorrect basis. Recent research shows that he was right, according to Poleszynski.

According to him tens of thousands of controlled studies have been published that document the possibilities of treating behavioral disorders, mental illness and a series of ordinary diseases by optimal nutrition and diet supplements.

"So why do so many studies conclude that diet supplements do not work?"

"They often use the wrong nutrients in the wrong compounds and in low doses," says Poleszynski.

Eliassen in the organization Fritt Helsevalg (Free healthcare Choice) points out that the Carnegie Foundation in USA in 1910 produced the Flexner report.

Some food supplements cost a lot, have no documented effects and are totally unnecessary for people to take.

Torunn Janbu, President, Norwegian Medical Association

"It argued against natural therapies and in favor of more "scientific" treatment methods. We are talking about a focused effort to destroy other medical models. Almost half of all medical education institutions went bust. The objective was to reduce available capacity so that the wages would remain high."

Torunn Janbu, president of the Norwegian Medical Doctors' Association is skeptical of these claims.

"If one claims that the wrong conclusions in studies are due to using the wrong doses, for example, it is possible to suggest that the documentation is reviewed. Nobody prevents good research," she says.

"According to JAMA 106, 000 Americans die each year from medication that is correctly prescribed and administered.

"Medication with active ingredients given to ill people can produce side effects and are not always free of risk. One is of course working on reducing side effects," responds Janbu.

She also claims that natural remedies have side effects, too.

"Natural medicines are effective to a very small degree. That's why people don't die from them. But they can produce allergies, upset stomach and influence the effect of other medicines one takes. To provide the highest degree of safety it is important that products to combat illness are controlled by the authorities, in respect of expected effects and side effects.

Lars Klette has experienced otherwise.

"In the autumn of 2006, after the LHL and Glitreklinikken had declined, I got approval from the National Committee for Research Ethics to carry out a study of Oralmat on COPD patients. One week before the study was about to start, the project manager pulled out, a doctor who was told he would be fired from his job if he carried out the study," says Klette.

He considers the requirement for documentation to be a problem, since the documentation for medicines are based on side effects.

"The effect must be documented as being appropriate for the health risk associated with using the medication. Since natural substances have few or no side effects, this requirement becomes absurd and inappropriate. On the other hand, if the effect itself had to be documented, the pharmaceuticals would be in a bad position since the effects are restricted to alleviation of symptoms," he says.

He responds to the fact that the president of the doctors' association, Janbu, claims that most Norwegians have a healthy diet by saying:

"The nutritional value of almost all known fruit and vegetables has decreased by up to 70 per cent in the last 30 years. Although the meat we get in Norway is less full of antibiotics that weaken the immune system, fish and shellfish are full of environmental toxins. Therefore we can no longer get by on food and medicines. The medical profession soon ought to realize that," says Klette.

"Rather than strict regulation of natural medicine and diet supplements, stricter regulation of sugar and alcohol might be more appropriate, in terms of public health. These substances are no doubt to blame for many of our health problems."

"It is important to have good information about how to look after your health. But how regulated do we want our society to be?" Janbu answers, and adds that there is a difference between medicines that are taken for treatment, and nutritional supplements.

"Some diet supplements cost a lot of money, have no documented effect and are totally unnecessary for most people who are taking them. Are we going to allow them to be marketed as something you need?" she asks.

"The same can be said about beauty products. People should still be allowed to choose themselves. A great deal of what we spend money on is relatively "worthless" and even destructive. We are not denied the opportunity to buy the products for that reason," responds Eliassen.

Klette says that pharmaceuticals trigger and control chemical reactions, while many natural substances trigger biochemical reactions that the body controls itself.

"Claiming that a natural substance that works, is a pharmaceutical product, can therefore easily be proven wrong by a simple product analysis," he claims.

"Janbu claims that natural substances do not work, but the pharmacies are full of them. Does Janbu think the pharmacies are deceiving people?"

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See also these links for further information:

<http://www.dagbladet.no/dinside/2008/04/14/532479.html>

<http://www.matoghelse.no/oralmat-en-alternativ-behandling-mot-kols.431823-48813.html>

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Are you allergic? Asthma? CF? COPD? Over-sensitivity? Other?

Last year saw sales of (mostly synthetic) pharmaceuticals for NOK 17.4 billion or NOK 3,700 per citizen, according to figures from the wholesale-based pharmaceutical statistics.

The increase in 2007 is 3.4 per cent compared to 2006. Measured in doses (DDD) the turnover increased in 2007 by 4.9 per cent compared to 4.1 per cent in 2006.

Source: The Norwegian Institute for Public Health

The sale of diet supplements and natural substances in 2006 were about NOK 2.17 billion.

Mail-order turnover, "home sales" and the internet, which the statistics don't capture sufficiently, are estimated to be about 600–800 million kroner.

Source: Branch Board for Natural Remedies

COPD-MEDICINE: COPD-patients benefit greatly from the natural product Oralmat, which is made from germinating rye sprouts.

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