



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on July 27, 2020

Yale Epidemiology Professor Touts Hydroxychloroquine Against COVID-19

“In the future, I believe this misbegotten episode regarding hydroxychloroquine will be studied by sociologists of medicine as a classic example of how extra-scientific factors overrode clear-cut medical evidence,” wrote Harvey Risch in a recent edition of *Newsweek* magazine.

Risch is not a writer for the *New American*, nor is he a truck driver, politician, insurance adjuster, real estate agent, or tax accountant. Rather, Dr. Risch is a professor of epidemiology at Yale School of Public Health, and he said unequivocally that hydroxychloroquine, sold under the brand name of Plaquenil, is “the key to defeating Covid-19.”



Dr. Risch has published over 300 peer-reviewed articles, and is on the editorial board of several leading medical journals. He wrote, “I am fighting for a treatment that the data fully support but which, for reasons having nothing to do with a correct understanding of the science, has been pushed to the sidelines.”

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Despite several studies that have demonstrated, to Risch’s satisfaction, “clear-cut and significant benefits to treated patients, plus other very large studies that showed the medication safety,” Risch has been disappointed that physicians who have been using hydroxychloroquine to save the lives of “hundreds” of patients have either been ignored or criticized, and have even faced revocation of their licenses. Those doctors “have been truly heroic,” Risch said.

Risch cites the use of hydroxychloroquine in Brazil, where a public hospital network purchased 75,000 doses of azithromycin (it is recommended that this common antibiotic, as well as zinc, be used in conjunction with hydroxychloroquine) and 90,000 doses of hydroxychloroquine. “Over the next few weeks, authorities began distributing these medications to infected individuals,” and the death rate began to “plummet.”

In contrast, the Swiss national government banned hydroxychloroquine for outpatient use, and COVID-19 deaths increased four-fold. Finally, the Swiss government reversed the ban, and the death rate quickly “reverted to what it had been beforehand.”

Professor Risch asks, “Why has hydroxychloroquine been disregarded?”

“For many, it is viewed as a marker of political identity.” It has become, in short, almost a requirement for Democrats, or even Republicans who oppose President Trump, to be reflexively against the drug.

Risch adds that, in many studies, the drug has not been used “properly.” He insists that to be effective,



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it should be used early in the course of the disease: “The combination of hydroxychloroquine, azithromycin or doxycycline, and zinc are well-suited for early treatment in the outpatient setting.”

The drug is also very inexpensive, as compared to the more “politically correct” Remdesivir.

Finally, Risch explained, there were concerns about the “risks of cardiac arrhythmia” with hydroxychloroquine. “But, what the FDA did not announce is that these adverse events were generated from tens of millions of patient uses of hydroxychloroquine for long periods of time often for the chronic treatment of lupus or rheumatoid arthritis,” Risch wrote. “Even if the true rates of arrhythmia are ten-fold higher than those reported, the harms would be miniscule compared to the mortality occurring right now in inadequately treated high-risk Covid-19 patients.” The arrhythmia death rates among users for lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, and malaria have been less than nine out of 100,000 users!

A new paper in the *American Journal of Medicine* by established cardiologists around the world confirms the high degree of safety of using hydroxychloroquine.

Back on March 19, not long after the coronavirus took over the entire news cycle, I wrote an article for this publication entitled “Old Drug May Wipe Out Coronavirus.” I had learned about the drug a short time before that, and wrote that an advisor to the Stanford University School of Medicine, Gregory Rigano, appeared on the popular *Tucker Carlson Tonight* show and claimed that hydroxychloroquine, combined with azithromycin, is a cure for the virus. I noted that Rigano pleaded with President Donald Trump to “authorize the use of hydroxychloroquine against coronavirus immediately.”

I knew that Trump was known to like Carlson’s program. I naïvely thought that everyone, regardless of political affiliation, would be overjoyed at the prospect of an existing medication that could be effective against COVID-19.

To my surprise, the very next day, President Trump favorably mentioned the drug during his daily coronavirus briefing. (I doubt that Trump read my article, but I do expect he had seen the Tucker Carlson program). But, rather than expressing optimism about the drug’s possibilities in controlling the pandemic in the United States, the media — almost in unison — immediately opposed its use. One reporter even flatly accused Trump of giving the American public “false hope.”

Representative Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), a rabid opponent of Trump, quickly opposed the drug as well: “Early results are in for the drug Trump has been hyping as a cure, and unfortunately, it’s not that good.” Schiff added, “We need to be guided by science, not hucksters or hype.”

If anyone is a huckster, it is Adam Schiff, a lawyer who apparently thinks he knows more about the issue than an epidemiologist from Yale.

The reaction of Schiff and other leftists in and out of the Democratic Party caucus and their media allies is a perfect example of the experiments of Ivan Pavlov. Pavlov was a Russian scientist who noted that dogs salivate at the sight (and smell) of meat. After ringing a bell at the same time he gave them meat, he later just rang the bell. He observed that the dogs salivated at just the ringing of the bell, because they now subconsciously associated the ringing of the bell with actual meat.

In much the same way, those on the Left (and even some “never Trumpers” neoconservatives such as George Will, Donald Lambro, and Bill Kristol) immediately oppose anything Trump is for, and support anything he is against. While many may chalk this up as just politics, when the lives of individuals are at stake — as well as our liberties and our economy — we need a better reason to oppose a drug than that Donald Trump has offered it up as a possible drug to combat COVID-19.



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