

Doctor, Stop Watching TV

By MIKE AUERBACH, Editor-In-Chief, Pharmaceutical Processing



We've all seen ads on television for dubious products touting their health benefits. One of my favorites is for a product that you stick on the bottom of your feet, leave overnight, and then peel off in the morning to reveal all of the "toxins" that have been purged from your body. Does it really work? Who knows? But I would venture to guess that all of these "toxins" that are showing up in the adhesive strip would disappear if these people would simply wash their feet once in awhile.

One thing that all of these ads have in common is the ubiquitous line: "These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA..." We are all pretty used to seeing this disclaimer and know that the products in question are usually of marginal value.

But what about ads from reputable companies who produce reputable products? Is anyone taking a look at these ads? Does anyone have the knowledge, experience and perhaps most importantly, the time to really dig into these claims and evaluate their merits?

The [FDA](#) [1] seems to think the solution is to ask medical practitioners to start evaluating these ads through a new program called the Truthful Prescription Drug Advertising and Promotion (Bad Ad Program).

The "Bad Ad" Program is administered by the agency's Division of Drug Marketing, Advertising, and Communications in the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research. And according to the FDA website; "It will help healthcare providers recognize misleading prescription drug promotion and provide them with an easy way to report this activity to the agency."

Enlisting the help of healthcare providers in the quest to weed out false advertising might, at first, seem like a good idea. And kudos to the FDA for trying to expand their reach by looking for volunteers to help with this program. But, aren't those in the medical field already amongst the busiest professionals around? Shouldn't they be concentrating on taking care of the sick — and not evaluating ads? I sure hope

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Published on Chem.Info (<http://www.chem.info>)

during my next visit my doctor doesn't have one eye on me and one on the TV.

What do you think? Please feel free to e-mail me with your thoughts at mike.auerbach@advantagemedia.com [2].

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