



Letter to the editor: The Pundit Speaks
By Randolph M. Howes, M.D., Ph.D.
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"Pomegranate Claims Violate The Law"

Recently, I read an advertisement in Discover magazine for pills made from pomegranate juice, which called their "pompills or POMx" the "Antioxidant Superpill." It went on to say that they have spent \$34 million in medical research, documented POMx's unique and superior antioxidant power and "revealed promising results for prostate and cardiovascular health." WOW! However, in very small print at the bottom of the page, they state, "These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease." Yet, their logo replaces the "O" in POM with a symbol of the heart and their article is written as though pomegranate juice or POM pills can prevent prostate cancer and protect against heart disease. Neither of these insinuations are true. In fact, the FDA says, "Pomegranates may be full of antioxidants, but there is no evidence that POM Wonderful's pomegranate products prevent heart disease, prostate cancer or erectile dysfunction." In February of 2010, the FDA issued a warning about the health claims the POM company made online about its products, which stated that its 100% pomegranate juice was shown to reduce blood pressure and reduce the risk of prostate cancer in scientific studies, using language that is only permissible for FDA-approved drugs and therefore in violation of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act. In September of 2010, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) filed a complaint against POM Wonderful for its printed health ads claiming its product produces a "30% decrease in arterial plaque and promotes healthy blood vessels." The FTC says these overstated claims are both false and unsubstantiated. According to the Chicago Tribune: "The labor-intensive and messy pomegranate was stuck on the sidelines of the American fruit market until 2002 when Beverly Hills billionaires Stewart and Lynda Resnick planted enough of the fruit to quadruple the market, simultaneously introducing POM Wonderful juice to consumers." In short, they jumped on the "antioxidant band wagon." The Director of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection said, "Any consumer who sees POM Wonderful products as a silver bullet against disease has been misled." As expected, the POM company disagrees with these charges.

In the America that I love, if you want to know the truth about antioxidants, read my new book, *Death In Small Doses? Antioxidant Vitamins A, C & E in the 21st Century: A Health Impact Statement*. It is available at Amazon.com, Barnes and Nobles and Borders bookstores and online. Let the truth protect you and do not be a chump for clever marketing and false claims. Many will lie to you for profit but I will tell you the scientific truth and let you decide for yourself.

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