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Schmidt ad raises questions about medical research

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Abstract (summary)

[...] Wulsin did not reject the experimentation altogether: "Nevertheless, the potential for success of Immunotherapy in making a substantial (both statistically and biologically significant) improvement in the lives of HIV-positive patients, based on the...

Full Text

AD WATCH

By Ben Fischer

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The ad: "Not Exactly the Good Doctor," a 30-second television spot jointly paid for by U.S. Rep. Jean Schmidt's campaign and the National Republican Congressional Committee.

Where to see it: Airing on network television in the Cincinnati area and available online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Xg1LOesOq8.

Script: Jean Schmidt: "I'm Jean Schmidt and I approve this message." (Ominous music) Woman: "Would you like Victoria Wulsin to be your doctor? She accepted payment for reviewing medical experiments in China that injected AIDS patients with malaria to cure them. The experiments failed. The experiments were condemned as outrageous and very dangerous. Dr. Wulsin's prescription? Change the name of the experiments and grab for more money. Victoria Wulsin: Not exactly the good doctor."

Analysis: This ad will again raise questions about Wulsin's ties to malariotherapy, a controversial and widely criticized line of medical experimentation that sought to cure AIDS patients by injecting them with malaria.

Critics of the research and Wulsin's political opponents have cast aspersions on her and the work's chief backer, Dr. Henry Heimlich, but this advertisement is modest in its claims. It sticks to previously reported facts, which the Wulsin campaign has not disputed since the ad first ran Wednesday.

In 2004, Wulsin, a physician, wrote a review of malariotherapy experiments and studies titled "Immunotherapy and Beyond" for the Heimlich Institute. Barbara Lohr, director of corporate marketing and communications for the institute's parent, Deaconess Associations, confirmed that Wulsin worked for the institute in 2004.

At the end of the review, Wulsin proposed changing the name of the experimentation to Immunotherapy and securing additional funding. The ad neglects to mention that Wulsin wrote that her suggestions were for discussion only.

The ad also does not mention two key conclusions reached by her review: "The preponderance of evidence indicates that neither malaria nor Immunotherapy will cure HIV/AIDS." Heimlich's original experimentation led to inconclusive results, according to Wulsin's review.

On the other hand, Wulsin did not reject the experimentation altogether: "Nevertheless, the potential for success of Immunotherapy in making a substantial (both statistically and biologically significant) improvement in the lives of HIV-positive patients, based on the East Africa trials, warrants verification and elaboration."

In February 2003, Paul Bronston, then the national chairman of the Ethics and Professional Policy Committee for the American College of Medical Quality, told *The Enquirer* the experiments were "very dangerous," and another doctor called human experimentation "outrageous" two weeks later in the *New York Times*.

"Why did she even take their money in the first place given the bad publicity these types of experiments have received?" Schmidt spokesman Bruce Pfaff said. "You're a physician, you should know better."

Wulsin spokesman Kevin Franck slammed the ad and said it was proof Schmidt is behind in the race.

"Clearly, Jean Schmidt's ship is sinking and she knows it," Franck said. "This is a last-minute desperation ploy to

distract voters from her record in Congress."

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