


# The top 10 health news stories of 2014

This year, we continued to provide an alternative to bland, “party-line” health news reporting. Here are some of the top stories we covered this year from a critical, Intelligent Medicine perspective.

**1) The Demise of the Low-SatFat Diet:** 2014 saw further erosion of the outmoded diet paradigm that has brought untold suffering to Americans. We started the year with a great podcast with Denise Minger, author of “Death by Food Pyramid,” which uncovers the scientific missteps—enabled by collusion from government, the food industry and the medical establishment—that ushered in the now-discredited low-fat dietary recommendations. 

A landmark study questioned the link between dietary saturated fat and heart disease. Yet another challenged the current recommendations by health authorities that we substitute polyunsaturated vegetable oils for butter and whole dairy products.

We reviewed the movie *Fed Up*, which makes the case for carbs as the culprit in our current epidemic of obesity, and featured an article by Dr. David Perlmutter rebutting the highly publicized news story “Meat and Cheese May be as Bad for You as Smoking.” Finally, I shared with readers some counter-think on vegetarianism.

**2) The Testosterone Controversy:** Mainstream endocrinologists waved a caution flag on testosterone use for men suffering from andropause, potentially depriving millions of American men of its advantages. They cite concerns over increased risk of heart disease and prostate cancer. Remarkably, no sooner were the restrictive guidelines introduced than new studies validated the heart benefits of testosterone and its lack of contribution to prostate cancer incidence.

**3) The Microbiome:** The bugs that inhabit our intestines made headlines in 2014. I shared remarkable research demonstrating that your “intelligent” intestinal flora may be hijacking your brain to get the sugary snacks that they thrive upon. More research suggests that blood sugar control, immunity, inflammation, mood, even our propensity for weight gain may be linked to our microbiome. A landmark article in the *New Yorker* tackled the controversial practice of “FMT”—fecal microbial transfer—suggesting that custom “crapsules” may be the future of medicine.

**4) Challenges to Freedom of Choice in Health Care:** Even as Americans embrace integrative medicine and supplements in ever-increasing numbers, we need to remain vigilant. Threats continue, in the form of restrictive regulations, bureaucratic over-reach and infringement upon our First Amendment rights to access truthful information about natural alternatives.

**5) More Bad News About Artificial Sweeteners:** New evidence showed that artificial sweeteners are not safe weight loss panaceas. I reviewed the evidence against artificial sweeteners; Hoffman Center nutritionist Leyla Muedin weighed in as well.

**6) The VA Hospital Scandal:** The mess at the VA hospitals is merely a reflection of the overall malaise of the U.S. medical system. Earlier this year, I reflected on the causes and offered some innovative solutions.

**7) The Drugging of America:** U.S. citizens are taking drugs in unprecedented numbers, and even the usually staid *New York Times* called for reassessment of our casual prescribing of often inefficacious anti-depressant drugs. Widely-used anti-anxiety drugs were found to dramatically escalate the risk of dying. I countered with an

article and a Clinical Focus podcast on safe, effective natural approaches to anxiety. In a 3-part series, I highlighted 12 Drugs That You Should Never Take.

**8) The Decline of Mainstream Medicine:** As the pace of medical “reform” accelerates, premiums are going up, patients are being denied coverage, freedom of choice is eroded, innovation discouraged, and doctors are increasingly hamstrung by bureaucratic requirements.

**9) The Ascendance of Pot:** In 2014, I took a contrarian stance on the popularization and legalization of pot. Nevertheless, in 2015, look to Intelligent Medicine for investigative reporting on the amazing potential medical benefits of non-hallucinogenic marijuana and hemp derivatives such as cannabidiol (CBD)—coming soon to a health food store near you!

**10) Ebola:** This year we sought to calm media-inflated fears of a “Zombie Apocalypse” and avoided the temptation to make far-fetched claims about “natural cures” for Ebola—withstanding legitimate evidence for non-drug ways to support immunity, 17 of which I highlighted in a recent article.

Thank you for joining me in this past year as we’ve navigated the ever-changing waters of the health industry. I hope you continue to enjoy this newsletter, our podcasts, radio show and website in the coming year. Please continue to share them with your friends and family to help get the word out.