

POLICY BRIEF

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The FDA Negative “Feedback Loop” on Kratom Disinformation?

The FDA launched its “shock-and-awe” disinformation campaign against kratom in 2012 when the Agency announced its Import Alert on kratom. Over the past 8 years the FDA has continued its unfair assault on kratom by pushing out inaccurate, distorted, and in some cases completely false attacks on kratom.

The process is a well-known and effective marketing technique that is used to manipulate consumer attitudes about a product or service, and in this case the FDA has used it to validate its false attacks on kratom and its safe use.

This how the FDA negative “Feedback Loop” on kratom disinformation works:

- FDA announces kratom is an unapproved drug that is unsafe using unverified and inaccurate information.
- FDA sends its press releases attacking kratom to partners it has information sharing agreements with, i.e., WebMD, Medscape and the American Medical Association¹.
- WebMD and Medscape spread the kratom disinformation by repeating the unverified and inaccurate information provided by the FDA on their online internet platforms.
- Using sophisticated optimization of information dissemination on the internet, these FDA partners aggressively disseminate the disinformation on kratom where it shows up in multiple medical information platforms like Mayo Clinic, Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation, the Cleveland Clinic, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Medical Association.

KEY FINDINGS

The FDA launched a “shock-and-awe” disinformation campaign against kratom in 2012 and has continued its unfair campaign of inaccurate, distorted, and false attacks on kratom for more than 8 years.

The FDA uses a manipulative “Feedback Loop” to distribute its disinformation on kratom on the internet, using top health care influencers to do its dirty work.

WebMD and Medscape, influential health care internet sites visited by millions of Americans, are formal partners with the FDA in disseminating information, including the FDA’s false narrative on kratom.

The internet is full of bad actors who regulatory peddle false information to promote their own agendas. The FDA has a team that is dedicated to promoting FDA messages on the internet.

The goal of the FDA is transparent in their efforts to ban kratom to clear the pathway for a Big Pharma company to file a new drug application for a synthesized kratom product to charge exorbitant prices to consumers for a product that is legally available today.

- The FDA touts the consensus from leading health “influencers” who are warning Americans about the dangers of consuming kratom. The FDA fails to disclose the information relied upon and used by those “influencers” originated with the FDA.

That is the FDA anti-kratom “Feedback Loop” the FDA uses to mislead the public, and to fuel the negative search engine results on the internet that is manipulated by the vast resources of the FDA.

This coordinated scheme to disseminate information to the American public is not secret, the FDA and WebMD announced their partnership in 2008ⁱⁱ when then FDA Commissioner von Eschenbach touted the access to “50 million unique visitors per month and to WebMD the Magazine’s 9 million print readers” as a key network “as a source of providing information to the public.” The agreement provided not only for the dissemination of FDA information, but also for the FDA web site to link directly to WebMD content.

Conclusion:

The internet is full of bad actors who regularly peddle false information to promote their own agendas. With kratom, the FDA has joined the ranks of the grifters, tricksters, and outright liars who play on the trust of the American people, particularly in an institution of government that people should be able to trust.

The FDA desperately wants to ban consumer access to natural kratom with the transparent purpose of creating an opportunity for an enterprising Big Pharma company to create a synthetic kratom drug that would mimic the benefits of the natural plant. The FDA knows that will never happen if consumers can purchase the natural plant because the Big Pharma company would not be able to charge exorbitant prices when kratom is legal to be sold as the food that it is.

The FDA’s attempt to expand its regulatory reach over kratom is a typical Washington power play by an Agency that transparently attempting to expand its budget and staff to impose one more unjustified restriction on Americans who should be able to make their own informed decisions on the products they use to maintain their health and well-being.

ⁱ <https://www.fda.gov/about-fda/fda-memoranda-understanding/non-profit-and-other-mous>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/news/20081203/fda-webmd-announce-partnership#1>