

*****PRESS RELEASE*****

Cyber Attack Spikes Report of Collusion Between Scientists, Industry, and Government

ITHACA, N.Y., Aug. 12, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The key event in the history of human genetic science was to be nurtured with financial and political support from the tobacco industry. Between 1960 and 1998 the tobacco industry furnished around 1,000 British and U.S. genetic researchers with an estimated 370 million research dollars^[1]. The industry aim was to grow human genetics into the cornerstone of a scientific tobacco PR strategy to portray lung cancer as originating in genetic weakness and not cigarettes.

An investigation just published ^[2] shows that this PR strategy has since then grown into a much broader collusion between scientists, industry, and governments to downplay and ignore the environmental and social origins of human diseases. Thus funding for genetics and genomics has expanded from lung cancer to examining common physical diseases into current epidemics of mental health disorders, and even social inequality.

The investigation is by the *Bioscience Resource Project*, a public interest science non-profit and publisher of *Independent Science News*. "Governments and industry discovered they had a common interest in disguising the failures of public policies and the harms of commercial products," says author Jonathan Latham, Ph.D. "Genetics has become the go-to science of polluters and governments disinclined to address politically challenging social and environmental issues."

"Consistently, we find weak scientific evidence for genetic influences is seized upon while strong evidence for environmental influences is disregarded," says Allison Wilson, Ph.D., Science Director of the *Bioscience Resource Project*. "No matter how much evidence accumulates against genetic explanations for a disease or disorder, the funding stream seems only to grow."

The investigation was officially published on July 31, 2013 (<http://www.independentsciencenews.org/science-media/science-and-social-control-political-paralysis-and-the-genetics-agenda/>). However, a Distributed Denial of Service (DDOS) attack on August 1st, described by its service provider as "massive," forced *Independent Science News* offline. This attack lasted five days. "To get ISN back the site had to be moved to another service provider and a different server," said Dr Latham.

"The timing of this attack, just 24hrs after publication, was spot-on perfect to cause maximum disruption to the launch. For three days the press release, tweets, and shares on Facebook directed readers only to a default error message."

Additional Quotes: "The search for meaningful and replicable genetic predispositions to the common diseases (such as lung cancer, heart disease and diabetes) has been almost wholly unsuccessful. Regardless, however, the PR project to use the public

profile of this genomic research to persuade the public that genetics is central to life expectancy and mental health has triumphed," says Allison Wilson, Ph.D.

"Genes 'for' common disorders (e.g. diabetes, depression) haven't been found because they do not exist. We can expect no public health benefits from sequencing individuals' genes" Claudia Chaufan, MD, PhD.

"Genetic determinist thinking about health probably saved the tobacco industry. It may well be the single biggest factor working against meaningful public health, prevention, and environmental policies. Industry knows this and that is why we think *Independent Science News* was attacked." Jonathan Latham, PhD

The Bioscience Resource Project is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit based in Ithaca, NY 14850, USA Tel: 1-607-257-0175 Website: <http://www.bioscienceresource.org/>

1. Gundle et al. (2010) "To Prove This is the Industry's Best Hope": Big Tobacco's Support of Research on the Genetics of Nicotine. *Addiction*. 105: 974–983. Wallace H (2009) Big tobacco and the human genome: Driving the scientific bandwagon? *Genomics, Society and Policy* 5: 1-54.

2. Science as Social Control: Political Paralysis and the Genetics Agenda is now available again on the website of Independent Science News (<http://www.independentsciencenews.org/science-media/science-and-social-control-political-paralysis-and-the-genetics-agenda/>)

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