

## **An Addendum to Our Article**

### ***Interventions for Prevention of Alzheimer's disease: A Focus on Olfaction***

Larry D. Reid

Our article concluded that taking common cold medicines, sold without a prescription, might be more harmful than beneficial. Nearly every drug-store and many grocery-stores sell a large array of drugs purported to shorten the duration of a common cold and implies that such drugs may even cure a common cold. Research indicates that these drugs only reduce some symptoms of a common cold, but in so doing may also put citizens at risk of enabling other diseases.

There are two major groups of pathogenic viruses that seem to infect the airway. For our purposes we can call those producing a common cold *cold viruses* and call those producing “the flu” *flu viruses*.

There are important differences between diseases induced by the two kinds viruses. Cold viruses can cause an infection that is surely uncomfortable and lasts about 10 days (most often) and is almost always cured by our innate immune system of the respiratory mucosa without any drug-intervention. On the other hand, flu viruses can cause very serious infections, so serious that they may lead to death. Both kinds of viruses induce some common symptoms, but there are critical differences (see the list similarities and differences in symptoms).

The public-health-establishment develops yearly vaccinations designed to halt the kind (kinds) of flu viruses that seem most likely to infect citizens during the up-coming winter months. When citizens get yearly vaccinations, epidemics of flu are prevented. Consequently, getting a yearly flu-shot is just rational, good common sense, good public health. Further, most often the shots are free.

On the other hand, there are no vaccines for the common cold and that is OK since colds are only nasty nuisances and the body's immune system cures incidents of a cold regularly *provided we do not interfere with our innate immune system lining the airway (e.g., taking drugs that hinder productivity of the innate immune system of the airway)*.

It can be serious problem when a drug can be purchased without a prescription and is advertised as a medicine for both a common Cold and Flu. When a citizen senses a real problem with an infection of the airway and concordantly believes that the problem can be dealt with by buying a drug whose label and advertisement indicates that the drug will treat both the Cold and Flu can lead to a serious problem. The citizen might believe that the drug might stop the progression of Flu, which it will not. The active ingredients in these medicines can temporarily mask the symptoms of an infection of the Flu and delay getting an anti-viral drug (which can be a fatal mistake).

Consider, these grocery-store-drugs often contain acetaminophen (Tylenol) which blunts fever and pain, but in so doing masks the symptoms of a progressing Flu-infection. A delay in treating Flu can be very problematic. Flu often escalates quickly, thereby setting an urgent need for proper medical care. *Thinking that a drug's container with the word Flu on it will treat the extant misery due to rapidly escalating flu-viruses can be a fatal mistake.*

Note, we know that even yearly vaccinations for the flu might not be effective every flu-season and if that happens many will quickly buy an OTC drug with a label for Cold or Flu. A mistake engendered by the bold and sustained statement *For Cold and Flu* (a false label, a false inducement to buy a cheaply made product with a high profit margin).

In brief, the label for Cold and Flu (or variants of such) should not be allowed. In addition to being false advertising, it is a potentially dangerous inducement that could lead to unnecessary misery.

Graph from Illinois Public Health. The columns depict whether the a symptom is rare or not. We add that the high temperature associated with Flu can be accompanied with chills. Fever with chills is a major symptom of Flu. Also, symptom on-set is abrupt with the Flu but gradual with a Cold (takes a couple or three days for the major symptoms to become manifest). Anti-viral medicines should be given quickly when major symptoms of Flu become manifest to prevent life-threatening problems from emerging.

Cold	Symptoms	Flu
Rare	Fever	Characteristic, high (100 degrees to 103 degrees F); lasts 3-4 days.
Rare	Headache	Prominent
Slight	General aches, Pains	Usual; often severe
Quite mild	Fatigue, Weakness	Can last up to 2-3 weeks
Never	Extreme Exhaustion	Early and prominent
Common	Stuffy Nose	Sometimes
Usual	Sneezing	Sometimes
Common	Sore Throat	Sometimes
Mild to Moderate; Hacking Cough	Chest Discomfort, Cough	Common; can become severe
Sinus congestion or earache	<b>Complications</b>	Bronchitis, pneumonia; can be life-threatening
None	<b>Prevention</b>	Annual vaccination; anti-viral drug
Only temporary relief of symptoms	<b>Treatment</b>	Anti-viral drug within 24-48 hours after onset of symptoms