

## **Diabetes Drug Maker Denies Danger despite Causing Tens of Thousands of Heart Attacks**

In a 334-page report by the Senate Finance Committee, the diabetes drug Avandia is shown to be linked with approximately 83,000 heart attacks since the drug came to market. Not only did the drug maker GlaxoSmithKline know of the risks for years and worked to keep them from the public, but the Senate committee report which was just released [Feb. 2010], says that it also criticized the Food and Drug Administration, saying that the federal agency that regulates food, tobacco and medications overlooked or overrode safety concerns found by its staff.

"Americans have a right to know there are serious health risks associated with Avandia, and GlaxoSmithKline had a responsibility to tell them," said Sen. Max Baucus, D-Montana, the committee chairman. "Patients trust drug companies with their health and their lives, and GlaxoSmithKline abused that trust."

But even a senate study is not enough to stop a major drug maker from denying the repeated danger and failure of synthetic drugs. GlaxoSmithKline issued a release Saturday saying the company "rejects the conclusions about the safety of Avandia" reported in a New York Times story Saturday. The Times story cited the Senate study.

"Contrary to the assertions in the story, and consistent with the FDA-approved labeling, the scientific evidence simply does not establish that Avandia increases ischemic cardiovascular risk or causes myocardial ischemic events," the GlaxoSmithKline statement said.

The Senate committee investigation stems from concerns that Avandia and other high-profile drugs put "public safety at risk because the FDA has been too cozy with drug makers and has been regularly outmaneuvered by companies that have a financial interest in downplaying or under-exploring potential safety risks," the report states.

The Senate report was developed over the past two years by committee investigators who reviewed more than 250,000 pages of documents provided by GlaxoSmithKline, the FDA and several research institutes.

Not only did the report define tens of thousands of drug-related heart attacks, it also outlines several other findings.

- GlaxoSmith Kline undertook attempts to undermine information critical of Avandia. As an example, committee investigators say they found that GlaxoSmithKline experts verified an outside study showing the cardiac problem, but the company publicly attacked the findings as incorrect.
- The New England Journal of Medicine called the drug's safety into question in 2007, saying Avandia has been under scrutiny for years. The Journal of the American Medical Association also questioned whether Avandia was safe in 2007.

- The report states that Regulatory agencies ought to re-evaluate whether [Avandia] should be allowed to remain on the market. It also states that health plans and physicians should not wait for regulatory actions. They should avoid using [Avandia] in patients with diabetes who are at risk of cardiovascular events, especially since safer treatment alternatives are available.

Unfortunately, the majority of Americans will either never be aware of these reports or because of the overwhelming unscrupulous influence of the drug makers, they will continue to believe they are safe to use these drugs as a means to improve their health. The fact is, there are always better alternatives and safer, more effective means of restoring blood sugar and insulin response than to impose such dangerous risks as described above.

While I will not direct anyone against their medical prescriptions, I will spend the time to discuss with my patients safe and effective health recommendations. –Dr. Wilson [\[Request Information\]](#)