

GLP podcast/video: Chemophobia brings left and right together; Scientists should fight disinfo on X; Sudafed scandal explained



Why do so many people on the political left and right, who agree on almost nothing, share a deep-seated fear of pesticides? Drugs that seem worthless may still affect our health. Researchers can boost science literacy by making a greater effort to engage the public on social media. But how exactly do they do it?

Podcast:

Video:

Join hosts Dr. Liza Dunn and GLP contributor Cameron English on episode 240 of Science Facts and Fallacies as they break down these latest news stories:

- [Viewpoint: Anti-pesticide hysteria brings together conspiracy theorists and science-illiterate people on the left and right](#)

Progressives and conservatives agree on very little. But when it comes to the dangers of pesticides, these political opponents often join forces in an attempt to ban the products that farmers rely on to protect their crops. What holds this odd coalition together? Some combination of distrust in public health officials and fear of technology. Scientists may have to develop new ways to address the concerns of these skeptical consumers without undermining their deeply held beliefs.

- [Why worthless drugs sometimes seem to work—What we can learn from the FDA's withdrawal of the decongestant phenylephrine](#)

Americans spend almost \$2 billion a year on the decongestant phenylephrine. Those stratospheric sales figures suggest that the drug alleviates common symptoms of congestion, but a large body of evidence indicates that phenylephrine, when taken orally, is largely ineffective, leading the FDA to declare in September that “current scientific data do not support that the recommended dosage of orally administered phenylephrine is effective as a nasal decongestant.” Why, then, do so many people use it? It might just come down to the placebo effect.

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- [Study: Scientists should use social media to fight advocacy group disinformation about modern agricultural biotechnology](#)

Millions of people rely on social media as their primary source of information on a variety of topics; they

also have high trust in scientists. As a result, researchers can promote scientific literacy among the general public by engaging with users on platforms such as Facebook and YouTube, a recent study has found. By partnering with influencers and interacting with people one on one, scientists can make progress in building support for the use of biotech crops and other important technological innovations in agriculture.

Dr. Liza Dunn is a medical toxicologist and the medical affairs lead at Bayer Crop Science. Follow her on X [@DrLizaMD](#)

Cameron J. English is the director of bio-sciences at the [American Council on Science and Health](#). Visit [his website](#) and follow him on X [@camjenglish](#)