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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ABBOTT LABORATORIES DELETES SAFETY CONCERNS FROM WEB

Washington, D.C., August 29, 2007 – Newly available data show that employees of Abbott Laboratories have been altering entries to Wikipedia, the popular online encyclopedia, to eliminate information questioning the safety of its top-selling drugs.

In July of 2007, a computer at Abbott Laboratories' Chicago office was used to delete a reference to a Mayo Clinic study that revealed that patients taking the arthritis drug Humira faced triple the risk of developing certain kinds of cancers and twice the risk of developing serious infections. The study was published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 2006.

The same computer was used to remove articles describing public interest groups' attempt to have Abbott's weight-loss drug Meridia banned after the drug was found to increase the risk of heart attack and stroke in some patients.

More...

The site's editors restored the deleted information, but Abbott's activities illustrate drug companies' eagerness to suppress safety concerns, said Jeffrey Light, Executive Director of the Washington, D.C.-based advocacy group Patients not Patents. "The argument that drug companies can be trusted to provide adequate safety information on their own products has been used by the pharmaceutical industry to fight against government regulation of consumer advertising. Clearly such trust is misplaced. As Abbott's actions have demonstrated, drug companies will attempt to hide unfavorable safety information when they think nobody is watching."

The changes are part of over one thousand edits made from computers at Abbott's offices. The data was obtained from WikiScanner, an independent site that allows users to look up anonymous changes to Wikipedia articles.

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