

This week I am continuing my explanation of **the Shaklee Difference**.

Last week I focused on Shaklee's integrity, their commitment to only make products of proven benefit, products that will do no harm and products that are as natural as possible.

This week I will focus on three more things that truly set Shaklee apart from the competition - their quality, their clinical studies and the Landmark study.

#3) Quality. Shaklee manufactures their products according to **pharmaceutical standards**.

That requires quality control tests on the raw ingredients, quality control tests during the manufacturing process and quality control tests on the final product. Of course, everyone claims that they use only highest quality control standards in manufacturing their products. **Yet we are constantly hearing about the FDA testing products purchased from health food stores or over the web and finding them either lacking in active ingredients or containing dangerous contaminants.**

How can the consumer compare product quality from one company to the next?

My suggestion would be to ask each company **how many quality control tests they run on each batch of their multivitamin, each batch of their flagship product and on all of their products during the year.**

The numbers for Shaklee are 350 quality control tests on each batch of Vita-Lea, 1,000 quality control tests on each batch of Vitalizer and in excess of 80,000 quality control tests on all of their products each year.

#4) Clinical studies. Shaklee has more than 100 human clinical studies performed on their products by independent investigators at major universities and published in peer-reviewed scientific journals. None of their competitors come close.

However, other companies have started to realize that scientific studies backing their products makes for good marketing, so they are starting to provide long lists of "scientific studies" backing their products.

Sorting the wheat from the chaff is not easy. But let me help by telling you what to look for - and perhaps the best way of doing that is by starting with **what I have seen on other companies web sites.**

- Some companies will support their products by saying "Our scientists have shown...". **My question is whether their scientists would still have had a job if they had "shown" that the product didn't work.**

My advice is to ignore studies performed by the company's own scientists. Look for studies performed by outside experts at major research universities.

- Some companies will support their products with "reviews" or position papers written by scientists. You should realize that the scientists were **paid by the company to write those "reviews"** and that the scientists that write them also are often being paid to be scientific advisors to the company.

Most importantly, those position papers are usually only found on the company's web site or in their literature. **They have not been peer reviewed (the process of peer review is described below) so there is no way to assure that the "reviews" are unbiased.**

- **Some companies will list studies that have been published in advertising journals rather than peer reviewed journals.**

I have a lot of experience publishing in peer reviewed scientific journals, so let me walk you through the difference between the two kind of journals.

When you submit a study to a peer reviewed journal, they send your manuscript to two or three of the top experts in the field (your peers - often your competitors) for review.

The experts go through every aspect of your manuscript from study design to data analysis to the conclusions you have made. And if they find anything that they don't like, your manuscript will be rejected or you will be required to revise it before it can be published.

This is a very demanding process, but it guarantees that only high quality studies can be published.

When a company submits a manuscript to an advertising journal it is a much simpler process. They pay the journal a certain amount of money and the journal publishes it - no questions asked. There is **no peer review and there is no assurance that the study was any good.**

You might be asking: "How a layperson can distinguish between an advertising journal and a peer reviewed journal?"

The most definitive way is to see if the journal is listed in the National Library of Medicine's public web site (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/>). If it is not found there it is not a peer reviewed journal.

However, that web site is not particularly user friendly.

A simpler rule of thumb is that if you can find the journal in the supermarket, health food store, or your favorite health professional's waiting room it is likely an advertising journal, not a peer reviewed journal.

- Many companies list studies done in test tubes, cell culture or animals rather than in humans as evidence that their products work.

Based on my over 30 years in the field of cancer drug development I can tell you that only about 10% of the drug candidates that look good in test tubes or cell culture actually work in animals - and that only about 10% of the drug candidates that look promising in animal studies actually work in humans.

And in reviewing the literature I don't think that percentages are any different for nutrients than they are for cancer drugs.

So my advice is to look at the abstract of the listed studies (most web sites will give you at least that much information).

If the study was done in test tubes, cell culture or animals I would pretty much ignore it. That kind of study tells that the product MIGHT work, but it doesn't tell you that it DOES work.

- Some companies will report clinical studies that simply focus on the **antioxidant potential of that product.**

I'm not particularly impressed by those studies. Unless the antioxidant reaches the right place (usually the cells) for a long enough period of time, it is unlikely to exert any beneficial effect - and most of the studies I have seen simply don't provide that kind of information.

More importantly, there is actually no evidence that antioxidants affect longevity (usually one of the claims that the companies are trying to make) unless they also have other mechanisms of action.

Resveratrol is a prime example of what I am talking about. It is an excellent antioxidant, but it is cleared from the body so rapidly that it is unlikely that its antioxidant potential is biologically significant. However, in the brief time that it is in the body it turns on the "anti-aging" genes and they remain "On" for another 24 to 48 hours.

Unfortunately, this kind of detailed mechanistic information is lacking for other antioxidants and therefore the potential effects on the aging process must be considered as unproven.

- Finally, many companies list studies done with ingredients found in their product rather than studies done with their actual product. There are many examples where the individual ingredients looked promising, but the final product containing those ingredients was ineffective.

Sometimes this is because of the way in which the ingredients were processed in making the product, but in other cases we may never know why the final product didn't work. I've seen far too many of these situations to be impressed by studies on individual ingredients.

My recommendation is to consider only those clinical studies done with their actual product. You might be asking: "How does the layperson know whether the study was done with the company's product or just ingredients contained in the product?"

This requires a bit more sleuthing, but any reputable journal will require the authors to list the source of their test substance in the Methods section of the paper.

The bottom line is that you should ignore statements like "Our scientists have shown..." and unpublished scientific reviews of their products. You should ignore test tube, cell culture and animal studies. You should ignore studies that just focus on antioxidant potential. You should ignore studies published in advertising journals, and you should ignore studies on ingredients rather than final products.

It will take a little bit of sleuthing on your part to make these distinctions, but when you do you will find that the best of Shaklee's competitors have only a handful of good clinical studies that back their products and most companies have no real proof that their products work in humans.

#5) The Ultimate Proof - The Landmark Study. Shaklee has one study that nobody else in the industry has - the Landmark study.

I can summarize the Landmark study by saying that it clearly showed that people who used the Shaklee supplements for 20 years or more were significantly healthier than people using other company's multivitamins or no supplements at all.

For a complete review of the Landmark study visit my "Tips From the Professor" archive. It is a free resource at www.chaneyhealth.com.

To Your Health!
Dr. Stephen G Chaney