

anamed international e.V.

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Concerning these major challenges regarding Artemisia: Dear Friends, since I sent my last newsletter, a lot of mails have arrived here, many thanks for them all! Several of you asked for a summary. Very helpfully, Mr. Udo S. has written a good summary, which I have revised, and which may help some of you to write to your local politicians or to write an article for your newspaper.

You may use this letter as it is or use it to write something in your own words.

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to you about a topic of vital importance.

It is about the plant "*Artemisia annua*", which is commonly known as sweet wormwood or sweet Annie.

This plant has been used traditionally as a medicinal plant in China for over 2000 years. It has become an international, political issue. Why? Because the Vietnam War was won by the communists because the North Vietnamese, who had been weakened by malaria, were fortified again in 1968 by chewing *Artemisia annua* leaves. (Both Americans and North Vietnamese lost more soldiers to malaria than from the bullets of the enemy).

They owed this knowledge to Tu Youyou, who was the leader of a Chinese research group. Following Mao's orders to research all possible medicinal plants which may be effective in treating malaria, she was the first, in 1968, to discover the anti-malarial medicinal plant, *Artemisia annua*. Then, in 1970, she developed a technique for extracting the active ingredient, artemisinin. For this second part of her work, she received the Nobel Prize in 2015! But the first part of her discovery is more important, because it can help people to help themselves! Instead of immediately passing on this important discovery of the Communists to governments worldwide, the WHO did exactly the opposite.

Even before the Nobel Prize was awarded, and even more so this year, the WHO recommends to all governments in the world not to use *Artemisia annua* as a medicinal tea against malaria and other diseases. Although the WHO cannot legislate, it can make recommendations and those countries that do not follow these recommendations will "dry up" financially when funds are being awarded.

What happened:

The first English-language publication on the extraction of the active substance artemisinin appeared in 1979.

Tu Youyou (the later Nobel Prize winner) presented the drug to the WHO at a congress in Beijing in 1982. The Chinese government offered the rights for its production to the whole of Africa, but the WHO rejected this offer. At that time, the western pharmaceutical industry had no products based on *Artemisia annua*. If the plant had become widely available, it would have meant much cheaper, more effective and with no side-effects, and the pharmaceutical industry would have lost its market for anti-malarial drugs. In 1994, Novartis signed a licensing agreement with Chinese partners and was granted exclusive rights to develop, register and market the drugs Coartem and Riamet worldwide, which contain derivatives of artemisinin. Artemisinin has been estimated to have saved the lives of more than 1.5 million malaria patients since 2000.

Nobody mentions how many people had to die before that, because the WHO has given exclusive authorisation to the western pharmaceutical industry and has forbidden the use of artemisia tea even up to today! In fact, a simple tea brewed from the leaves of the *Artemisia annua* plant is just as effective in treating malaria in clinics as isolated artemisinin derivatives. This information was and still is suppressed.

Even the pharmaceutical industry, however, has had its challenges. Laboratory tests (pubmed.gov) showed an extremely strong effect of *Artemisia annua* or its extracted active ingredients on cancer cells. This has led to a comprehensive attack on the plant. The largest pharmaceutical companies in the West have stopped research into antibiotics in order to devote more attention to the more lucrative drugs used in oncology. What a shock they must have had when they read that artemisinin or even a simple tea from *Artemisia annua* sometimes leads to a massive reduction in the number of active cancer cells. To complete the drama, *Artemisia annua* tea or leaf powder is most effective in rapidly growing cancer, i.e. exactly where radio- or chemotherapy typically fails. Artemisia also sometimes works in cases where cancer cells have built up resistance to chemical agents.

Billions of dollars / Euro / pounds profit per year are at risk!!!

We scroll forward. Today the WHO recommends all governments to ban any part of *Artemisia annua* in any form as a drug in order to protect its pharmaceutical friends. The WHO states that enough pharmaceutical products are available at low cost. (Low cost? Just one single artesunate ampoule with 60mg artemisinin costs about 195 Euros in a German pharmacy. The same amount of active substance is in your blood if you swallow 6g *Artemisia annua* anamed (tea or powder) worth 2 Euros). In this way, cancer patients are financially ruined worldwide.

In a 180 degree twist of the facts, this ban is justified by saying that a regular dosage of tea would lead to a weakening of the effect of the industrially produced artemisinin tablets, for example against malaria. As pubmed.gov links prove, the exact opposite is the case. Several years ago, malaria parasites developed resistance to pharmaceutical drugs with the isolated single active ingredient. After administration of the whole plant in tea form or simply orally administered raw, the resistance decreased, and the effect of this ingredient, artemisinin, was restored.

So now Prof Tu Youyou's two discoveries are assessed completely differently: Praised to heaven and damned to hell! Praised to the skies of the western pharmaceutical industry, because Tu showed how to make money by isolating an active ingredient. Damned to hell, because Tu's rediscovery of this plant as a simple antimalarial drug led to the Americans losing the Vietnam War in 1975 and thus finally having to give up all claims to power in that part of Asia. What an embarrassment! That's why it was not mentioned in the presentation of the Nobel Prize 40 years later, in 2015!

And the EU?????

A way out for such patients suffering from malaria, cancer, borreliosis etc. would have been to drink the tea from *Artemisia annua* not as a remedy but as a simple food. Even that is not possible: the EU has dutifully followed in the footsteps of the WHO and blocked this life-saving loophole. In November 2019, it classified all products made from this plant, which have been used in Europe for many years as tea and capsules etc., as "unauthorised novel foods" and banned them.

The dramatic consequences resulting from this disastrous policy are summarized on the anamed's website: www.anamed.org. anamed has made an enormous contribution to reducing the incidence of malaria in the tropics by teaching local people how to cultivate and use the plant *Artemisia annua*. This wonderful, humanitarian work is now threatened - by politics.

Many thanks in advance on behalf of all the patients who, through your help, have survived. Many thanks too for writing letters of protest to politicians all over the world!

Some important publications:

Antitumor activity of an *Artemisia annua* herbal preparation and identification of active ingredients:
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/31132755>

Dried whole-plant *Artemisia annua* slows evolution of malaria drug resistance and overcomes resistance to artemisinin:
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25561559>

Evaluation and pharmacovigilance of projects promoting cultivation and local use of *Artemisia annua* for malaria:
<http://www.malariajournal.com/content/10/1/84>

The WHO vs. the Tea Doctor:
<https://slate.com/technology/2013/04/wormwood-tea-to-treat-malaria-the-who-is-opposed-to-an-effective-preventive-medicine.html>

Perspectives of the *Artemisia annua* Dry Leaf Therapy (ALT) for Malaria and of its Re-Purposement as An Affordable Cure for Artemisinin-Treatable Illnesses:
https://insa.nic.in/writereaddata/UploadedFiles/PINSA/PINSA_2018_Art38.pdf

Dried Whole Plant *Artemisia annua* as an Antimalarial Therapy:
<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0052746>