



Fake Doctors on Social Media

Alarming Business of Selling Unproved Dietary Supplements Online Circumventing Existing Regulations

Pravda Association investigated the phenomenon of fictitious doctors operating on social media. As it turns out, the issue is widespread, extending far beyond Poland's borders, and posing a real threat to users worldwide. The entire operation revolves around online sales of shilajit, a debatable dietary supplement with supposedly miraculous health properties. Importantly, in recent times a significant shift in tactics could be observed.

Fake Doctors and Social Media Treatment

At the beginning of the year, actions of various Polish [media outlets](#) and influencers resulted in taking down one [such profile](#). However, it quickly became clear that **[other fake doctors](#) are still active on social media, effectively reaching new audiences**. This demonstrates the ineffectiveness of current efforts to combat medical disinformation.

The journalistic investigation revealed that **this case is not limited to individual profiles. It spans an organised network operating in multiple languages and countries**. The core objective is the online sales of shilajit, a supplement that is supposed to help with a number of different illnesses and ailments. While each successful removal of such a profile should be considered a positive step, it's also far from sufficient given the findings of the investigation.

Organized Network

Investigators with the Pravda Association have uncovered **at least 30 profiles** operating in countries such as [Poland](#), [Italy](#), [Germany](#), [France](#), [the Czech Republic](#), and the [United Kingdom](#). Videos published on social media reach hundreds of thousands of users daily. Although the network's operations vary in some details, they follow a strikingly similar pattern. The supposed "experts" frequently appear to be the same individuals presented under different names and nationalities. Evidence gathered indicates that the activity ultimately leads back to a Vietnamese e-commerce company.



Wellness Nest's operations have been under scrutiny in recent months by [media outlets](#) in the [UK](#), and the [Netherlands](#), which have reported on the use of images of well-known [doctors](#), [scientists](#), and [celebrities](#) in [deepfake](#) videos promoting supplements sold by the store. What's new is the apparent shift away from this tactic in favour of unknown individuals who suddenly surface on social media. **These self-proclaimed experts offer health advice and recommend products from this specific manufacturer as a miracle cure for all ailments.**

Key findings:

- **At least 30 profiles operating under the same scheme have been identified across different European countries.** The core activity of these fake experts is the sale of shilajit, which is claimed to have healing properties.
- Another common element is directing users to the Wellness Nest store—a US-registered company with roots in Vietnam. Most probably, this is based on an affiliate marketing model (without any proper reveal of such relations), often using links containing the "?ref=" string, which generate profits for the authors upon conversion. The company itself [denies](#) these allegations.
- Wellness Nest is run by [GlobalEcomCom LLC](#), which appears to have close ties to a Vietnamese e-commerce company called [Pati Group](#). Furthermore, payment details (e.g., PayPal address) also point to the Asian country. Another clue pointing to Vietnam is the fact that the Wellness Nest website directs its visitors to a Facebook [group](#) managed by administrators from that country.
- The entire operation is highly advanced – social media videos are created using [tools](#) that [allow](#) for detailed customisation, e.g. by adding custom backgrounds, creating custom avatars, and a high level of personalisation. Potential [profits](#) promised by the creators are undoubtedly a strong incentive for further campaigns of this type.

Unenforceable Regulations

In the European Union, dietary supplements are subject to strict regulations, including those by the European Food Safety Authority ([EFSA](#)). However, when it comes to sales conducted exclusively online, especially by entities operating abroad and using payment intermediaries, enforcement of currently existing regulations is very difficult.

As we can see, **individual profiles identified so far are just the tip of the iceberg.** In reality, the problem isn't about individuals impersonating experts. It's an entire business



model operating without restraint, endangering the health and perhaps even the lives of many people all over the world.

At the same time, the findings point to the need for a decisive response to this harmful practice – both from state institutions (in the form of stricter and more enforceable regulations) and social media platforms (e.g., by introducing/expanding the "trusted flaggers" program to countries where it is not yet in operation, and identifying reliable actors to report such practices). Grassroots efforts cannot effectively counter organised, profit-driven campaigns augmented by increasingly more common and more sophisticated AI tools.

Read more:

<https://pravda.org.pl/lekarze-ktorzy-nie-istnieja-siec-falszywych-ekspertow-sprzedaj-e-suplementy-na-calym-swiecie/>

Contact us

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Pravda Association is a non-governmental organisation in Poland specialising in countering disinformation and misinformation, as well as media education and civil society development. A member of the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN), the European Fact-Checking Standards Network (EFCSN), and an active participant in the fact-checking community of the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO).