

## Australian Mum Singlehandedly Defeats Sex Magnet Advertiser

Written by Harriet Hall  
Friday, 30 January 2009 00:00

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Sandra Quincy writes from Australia to tell us about her successful anti-quackery activities "down under."

I thought that you might be interested in the success that I have had with getting a magnetic product removed from sale in Australia. It all started when a Century Mail booklet fell out of my October 2008 Reader's Digest. I looked at it out of curiosity and saw an ad for this little plastic case called the Sex Magnet. It claimed to increase a man's libido and promote oxygen and blood flow if the man put it into his trouser pocket. I was so angry at such a stupid claim that I wrote to the Australian Complaints Resolution Panel. They investigate therapeutic goods. They responded to my complaint and said that they would investigate the claim when they next met. I got a reply last week.

They asked the advertiser to back up their claims. The advertiser said that "whilst this company has not undertaken its own empirical research into the effects of magnetic therapy, there is a wealth of worldwide research, knowledge and information into this field" and that "the specific issue of improved blood flow mentioned is highlighted in the attached research precised article." The panel looked at the evidence and found that it did not provide support for the claims made for the product. The bibliographical references did not in any way relate to libido and the one complete paper had no relevance to the claims made.

The panel found that the advertisement was misleading and unverified and it abused the trust and exploited the lack of knowledge of consumers. The advertisers are to withdraw the advertisement from future publications, arrange for a retraction to be published in the magazine (Reader's Digest) that had the booklet included in a mailout, put a retraction on their website and mail a retraction to all people who bought the product.

I can hardly wait to see the retraction in a future Reader's Digest. The website retraction must be shown for 60 days and it has to be on the front page and viewed without scrolling down. It will be found at [www.centurymail.com.au](http://www.centurymail.com.au). I might add that the product was being sold for \$39.95 plus postage and handling. I am so happy at the outcome in this case but there is still so much more that needs to be done to stop companies like this from exploiting gullible people. I am a mum of three adult children and I work as a teacher aide. Once I would have expected someone else to complain but since getting hooked on the JREF site a few years ago I now try to speak/act up when I can.

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Kudos to Sandra! I have complained about a lot of quack claims to magazine and newspaper editors, to the FDA, the FTC, the Better Business Bureau, the state Attorney General's office, medical boards, etc. but I seldom get any kind of satisfactory response, and it's easy to become discouraged. Doctors rarely lose their licenses for quackery, they only lose them for things like sexually abusing patients. People like Kevin Trudeau reinvent themselves and keep making millions even after regulatory actions stop some of their activities. A recent report showed that the FDA had only sent out 44 warning letters to supplement manufacturers in the entire year of 2008, most based on false medical claims on websites. See [this site](#) for details on that. Daily It can seem like a losing battle, but if we don't keep up the fight the world will slide back into a prescientific superstitious medieval morass.

Sandra's story is a breath of fresh air and it encourages me to keep complaining. I hope readers will be inspired to follow her example. We may feel powerless, but each one of us can do some small thing to promote science and critical thinking, even if it's just a letter to the editor of your local paper to protest their uncritical mention of a psychic or a dowser. To quote President Obama, "Yes, we can." We can make a difference.