Viral Cancer Video Sets Out to Skewer Bad Science [VIDEO]

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July 11, 2018 By Casey Halter

Ever wonder about those “Amazing Cancer Cure Videos” all over the internet? You know the ones — bold captions, scientific images and unbelievable claims of a discovery that will put an end to unknown outcomes and expensive cancer therapies. The thing is, most of those videos are not real, and a new parody of those narratives has now itself gone viral, Wired reports.

The two-minute video, titled “This NATURAL TRICK can CURE YOUR CANCER” was created by researchers at the Office for Science and Society at McGill University in Montreal in an effort to combat viral pseudoscience clips. It mimics the aesthetic and messaging of many of the fake videos that target cancer patients online (focusing on a fictional cancer-curing moss) — before pivoting to the real message: “Be skeptical. Ask questions.”

It’s advice that cancer researchers, doctors and informed patients should heed when considering options for cancer treatment. As of early this week, the video, which serves as a reminder not to always believe claims made online, has been viewed over 7 million times across Facebook and Twitter.

“I think there’s genuine harm that can be done with videos that purport to claim there is a cancer cure and that big pharma is hiding it from you,” said Jonathan Jarry, the McGill researcher who made the video. “The harm can be financial. The harm can be side effects that somebody doesn’t need to go through because there’s no benefit at the end of it.”

While cancer patients and their families often need hope to get through diagnosis and treatment, videos like these remind those seeking real treatment information to fact-check what they read on the internet.

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