



## Diabetes Drug Avandia Harmful to Heart

Written On February 22, 2010 By [Bob Kraft](#)

The diabetes drug Avandia, manufactured by GlaxoSmithKline, has been found to cause heart attacks and heart failure. Confidential government reports supposedly call for the drug to be taken off the market. The [Dallas Morning News](#) has consolidated several news articles on this subject, and here are excerpts:

The reports, obtained by The New York Times, say that if every diabetic now taking Avandia were instead given a similar pill named Actos, about 500 heart attacks and 300 cases of heart failure would be averted every month because Avandia can hurt the heart.

Avandia, intended to treat Type 2 diabetes, is known as rosiglitazone and was linked to 304 deaths during the third quarter of 2009.

"Rosiglitazone should be removed from the market," one of the reports, written by Dr. David Graham and Dr. Kate Gelperin of the Food and Drug Administration, concludes. Both authors recommended that Avandia be withdrawn.

The internal FDA reports are part of a fierce debate within the agency over what to do about Avandia, manufactured by GlaxoSmithKline. Some agency officials want the drug withdrawn because they believe there is a safer alternative; others insist that studies of the drug provide contradictory information and that Avandia should continue to be an option for doctors and patients. GlaxoSmithKline said that it had studied Avandia extensively and that "scientific evidence simply does not establish that Avandia increases" the risk of heart attacks.

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The bipartisan, multiyear Senate investigation – whose results are expected to be released publicly on Monday but which were also obtained by The Times –sharply criticizes GlaxoSmithKline, saying it failed to warn patients years earlier that Avandia was potentially deadly.

“Instead, GSK executives attempted to intimidate independent physicians, focused on strategies to minimize or misrepresent findings that Avandia may increase cardiovascular risk, and sought ways to downplay findings that a competing drug might reduce cardiovascular risk,” concludes the report, which was overseen by Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont., and Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa.

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