Frances Oldham Kelsey

(1914 - 2015)

Saviour of babies from thalidomide

THIS IS BLACK AU

THOUSANDS of malformed bable will have been born because of colossal medical blunder. New Zealand may not hav

There is one answer to the who say that thalldonide—which wonder-drugged a pill-taking be ternational public into trusting deep-sleep acceptance—was a readily available in this country WRONG!

There was nothing to stop chemist counter-prescribing the 'first-schedule poison.'' Under the Poisons Act, retail distribution w

Eight montl public was



's legacy tragedy

NIGHTMARE will leave a legacy The global pictures

red deformed babies are expected i ext few weeks as a result of mother es taking thalidomide during ear

Ireds of Americans were given the ntal basis, according to Dr. Franci nt scientist who blocked the drug fo

r Vandeput, 25, le in prison accuse y-born armiess daughter. She took y presnancy

, born without arms because of the halidomide, has been baptised in the trade name of Distaval, the drabirth abnormalities in Sydney. Monted and prossly deformed arms are

t Finkbine, 30, wept as she lost : r "drug baby,"

Frances Oldham Kelsey trained as a pharmacologist at McGill University, Montreal and completed her PhD and MD at the University of Chicago where she became interested in drugs that cause birth defects.

In 1960 Kelsey began working at the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). During her first month of employment, Kelsey received an application from the pharmaceutical company Richardson Merrell to begin mass-marketing the drug thalidomide in the United States. The drug had already been sold to pregnant women in Europe, Africa, Australia and Canada to prevent morning sickness. Kelsey was not convinced the drug was safe, and repeatedly denied the company's request to market the drug, citing the insufficient availability of clinical trials to establish risks. The company complained to Kelsey's bosses, calling her a petty, fussy, and stubborn bureaucrat.

Kelsey's stand was vindicated in 1961 when reports from Europe began appearing, linking thalidomide to numbing in the arms and legs, and then to malformation of foetal limbs. The Australian researcher William McBride had also written a letter to The Lancet drawing attention to the link between the drug and birth defects. Studies eventually revealed that more than 10,000 children worldwide had birth defects linked to the drug and it was finally withdrawn from sale.

Kelsey was hailed a hero and the case was used by the Kennedy Administration to pass stronger drug regulations. She received the President's Award for Distinguished Federal Civilian Service in 1962 from John F. Kennedy, and in 2000 was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.



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tich a warning didn't come till mecone raised the subject, months ter.
This ridiculous situation is curnity before Parliament.