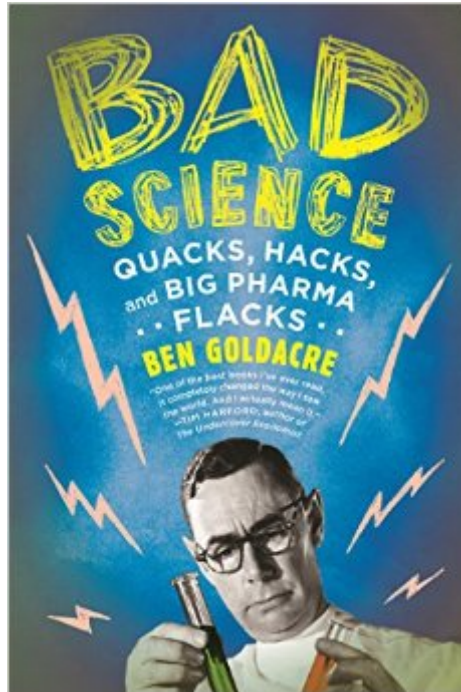# Bad Science: Quacks, Hacks, And Big Pharma Flacks

Synopsis

Have you ever wondered how one day the media can assert that alcohol is bad for us and the next unashamedly run a story touting the benefits of daily alcohol consumption? Or how a drug that is pulled off the market for causing heart attacks ever got approved in the first place? How can average readers, who aren't medical doctors or Ph.D.s in biochemistry, tell what they should be paying attention to and what's, well, just more bullshit? Ben Goldacre has made a point of exposing quack doctors and nutritionists, bogus credentialing programs, and biased scientific studies. He has also taken the media to task for its willingness to throw facts and proof out the window. But he's not here just to tell you what's wrong. Goldacre is here to teach you how to evaluate placebo effects, double-blind studies, and sample sizes, so that you can recognize bad science when you see it. You're about to feel a whole lot better.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Upfront, I am a sucker for books with this sort of title and content. Just get me started on the errors in thinking that abound, and I can go for as long as the refreshments and good company hold out.So maybe it was a case of me not liking my own medicine.What is good about the book? He shows that in matters of science:1) Things are probably more complicated than the media makes it2) You have to be skeptical of any scientific report - whether it is from a university, a pharma company, a acupuncturist, or even your mother3) Be very careful about any statistical statements4) A lot of sham medicine has been and is being perpetratedThat's about it. And it is very good to have someone take the time to present arguments and examples from the real world to back up those

warnings.What I found unsatisfying about the book? His tone. He doth protest too much, repeatedly telling us that he does not have axes to grind, or that he is level-headed, objective, and only strictly presenting the truth. The number of times he bashes Homeopathy and all the idiots who follow it made me want to go out and get a Homeopathy treatment and get better, just to spite him. I did plenty of page flips through sections where he was on a tear, looking for when the vitriol cooled and he would get back to some facts.He says outright that before 1934 doctors were useless. Wow. For a book that warns against making claims without empirical substantiation, that is a pretty strong statement. He lumps all other forms of medicine, throughout all time, into the useless bucket. And all humanity who has practiced or received medicine before 1934 in the West into the idiot bucket.

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