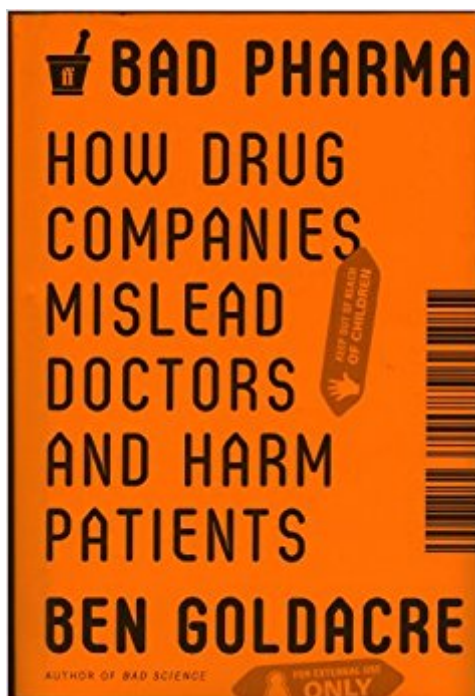


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Bad Pharma: How Drug Companies Mislead Doctors And Harm Patients



Synopsis

We like to imagine that medicine is based on evidence and the results of fair testing and clinical trials. In reality, those tests and trials are often profoundly flawed. We like to imagine that doctors who write prescriptions for everything from antidepressants to cancer drugs to heart medication are familiar with the research literature about a drug, when in reality much of the research is hidden from them by drug companies. We like to imagine that doctors are impartially educated, when in reality much of their education is funded by the pharmaceutical industry. We like to imagine that regulators have some code of ethics and let only effective drugs onto the market, when in reality they approve useless drugs, with data on side effects casually withheld from doctors and patients. All these problems have been shielded from public scrutiny because they're too complex to capture in a sound bite. But Ben Goldacre shows that the true scale of this murderous disaster fully reveals itself only when the details are untangled. He believes we should all be able to understand precisely how data manipulation works and how research misconduct in the medical industry affects us on a global scale. With Goldacre's characteristic flair and a forensic attention to detail, *Bad Pharma* reveals a shockingly broken system and calls for regulation. This is the pharmaceutical industry as it has never been seen before.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Ben Goldacre fills a vitally important niche in popular science literature. His books serve as a way of explaining highly technical and complex medical issues in language that is easily understood and with emphasis and focus that makes the seriousness of the issues at hand impossible to ignore. Goldacre also holds himself to a far higher standard of scientific excellence than the groups he is critiquing, exhaustively referencing, justifying and clarifying his points so that there is no doubt of the accuracy of his claims. This book sinks a knife into the heart of the nonsense and pseudo-science that is far too often espoused by the pharmaceutical industry and tacitly endorsed by overawed journalists and cowed academics. If you want to know why the drugs you are taking sometimes don't work and often make you ill then you need to read this book. And any medical practitioner, academic or researcher who does not read this book should be thoroughly ashamed of themselves. It is absolutely excellent.

I have recently retired as a lecturer on an Allied Health course, and I can honestly say that my students would have learned far more from this book about how research can be corrupted, and how good research should be designed, than they would have done from a year of "Research" lectures at university. Yes, some of it is scary reading, but with this and "Bad Science," Ben Goldacre has given the world of medical research the kick up the backside it has sorely needed. As an added bonus, the writing style is also highly readable.

First off, this is a must read for anyone interested in the shortcomings and pitfalls of drug marketing. Well documented, and a real eye opener. Overall makes you wonder if any drugs, especially still under patent, do what they claim. However he offers little insight about the quality of any particular drugs, a few special cases are mentioned, it mostly is about how drugs are developed, tested and marketed. Not technical, though he does go over some of the basic testing methodology needed to understand his points. The one thing I came away from with this is research any drug you've been prescribed before taking it blindly, even at your doctor's recommendation, assuming it's not an emergency situation, and be proactive with your doctor if you do not get the results expected, or you have side effects. There's almost always more than one treatment plan. The author seems passionate and sincere about his subject. What I don't like about it is the writing style is preachy, a

little sensational ("as we shall see in the next chapter" "horror story" etc. at least once every chapter) and redundant, the same info could have been presented much more concisely and convincingly in half the space or less. In fact if you just google and read various reviews of the book you'll get pretty much all the major points. Maybe he's trying to be careful to show the pharm companies in a bad light without getting sued- a real life concern, and/or really back up what he's saying. He notes citations for most if not all of his claims, though it's a little ironic he points to studies that show studies are not accurate, kind of like saying 82.6% of statistics shown as percentages are false.

I actually bought this book because of the good reviews it had. Bad Pharma is a book that addresses how Pharmaceutical companies have intentionally and unintentionally mislead doctors into prescribing as many medications they can to their patients. It also addresses the reason why Pharmaceutical companies 70% of their profit comes from the USA. The book gives very through details on how Pharmaceutical companies mislead their doctors and the medical industry through their sales techniques, false clinical trials, and the corruption that goes on in the pharmaceutical company. I really enjoyed how Ben Goldacre talks about how many medications that have been proven to help relieve a certain illness has proven to do otherwise via clinical studies outside parties have conducted to verify if it really was effective. He also addresses how major drug companies such as Merck & Co. have altered their clinical trials results just to get their drug on the market. Similarly what happen to Merck& Co. and their drug, Vioxx, it ended up killing many people. Vioxx was used to reduce pain, inflammation, and stiffness caused by osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis. When Merck and Co. were sued, many safety hazards came about that were not disclosed by the company. The drug ended up being taken off the market because it was more dangerous than effective. Ben also addresses how Direct to Consumer selling has increased the usage of medication in the USA and how medication advertisements on TV can be misleading to consumers. It is so misleading that it is only permitted in USA and New Zealand. This is why 70% of Drug Companies' profit comes mainly from the USA. Ben Goldacre also explains how Pharmaceutical Companies sponsor or pay for many of the academic journals written about the drugs they place on the market, bribe lobbyists, sponsor patients groups, pay for the required professional education for doctors, work together with educational and governmental institutions, and numerous unethical sales/marketing techniques just to get their product out in the market. Bad Pharma was a very informational book. It provided many statistical facts about Pharmaceutical companies and studies that have been conducted to prove that they mislead doctor and patients.

The book focused on the medical industry in general. It was perfect for my research project.

This book persuasively explains how pharmaceutical money, rather than unbiased clinical trials, largely determines which prescription drugs will be urged on patients. The arguments in the book are supported by research and data made available to the reader. When reading the book, follow some of the threads to satisfy yourself that what Dr. Goldacre says is factual. Then look up your own doctors on the Dollars for Doctors website to see if they have received pharma money for the medicines they prescribe for your diseases.

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