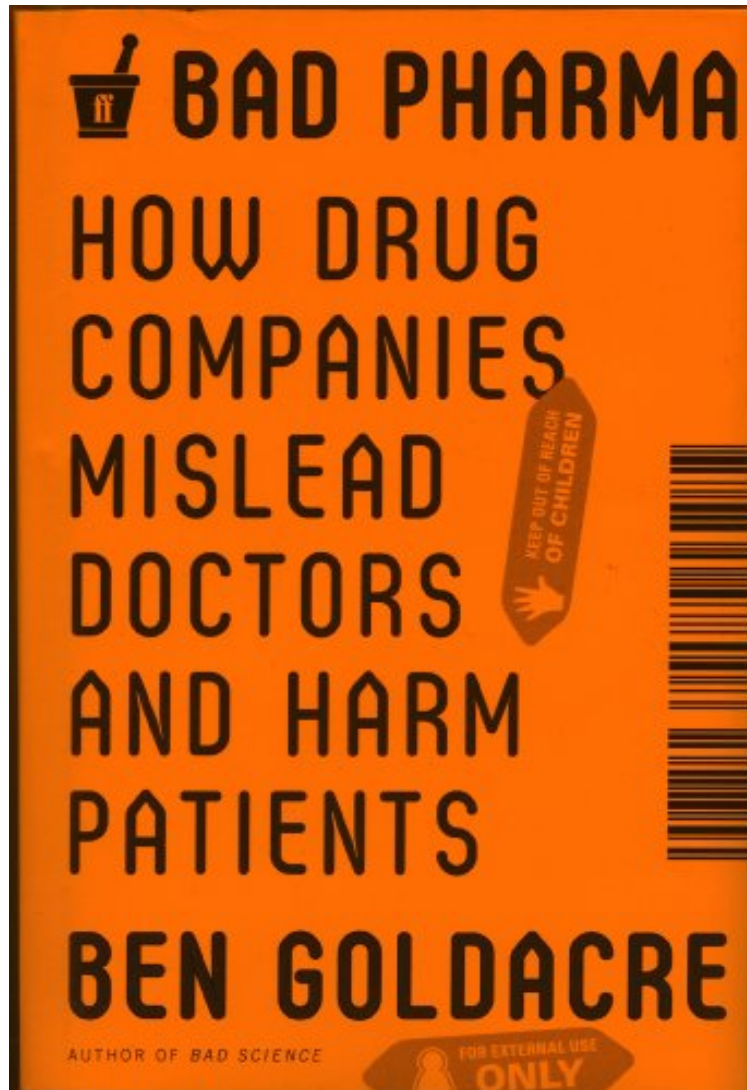


# Bad Pharma: How Drug Companies Mislead Doctors and Harm Patients

*Ben Goldacre*

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**Ben Goldacre : Bad Pharma: How Drug Companies Mislead Doctors and Harm Patients** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bad Pharma: How Drug Companies Mislead Doctors and Harm Patients:

43 of 45 people found the following review helpful. Extensive, well-written and scientific. By mrandrewv 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. 14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Should be compulsory reading. By Customer 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. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Must read for anyone before committing to medical drug treatment, but could be written much better. By Customer 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.

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.

From Booklist In the follow-up to his popular *Bad Science* (2010), British medical doctor Goldacre reveals how pharmaceutical companies mislead doctors and hurt patients. They "sponsor" trials, which tend to yield favorable results, while negative results often remain unreported. He also reports that drug companies spend twice as much on marketing and advertising as on researching and developing new drugs. Unfortunately for U.S. readers, he focuses largely on the UK, but ghost authorship of studies and "continuing medical education" boondoggle trips for doctors are problematic everywhere, and he does refer to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on multiple occasions. And everyone, everywhere should feel unsettled by his discovery that pharmaceutical companies funnel \$10 million to \$20 million a year to such major medical journals as the *New England Journal of Medicine* and the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Not surprisingly, he notes, studies funded by the pharmaceutical industry are that much more likely to get published in these influential journals. Goldacre's essential expose will prompt readers to ask more questions before automatically popping a doctor-prescribed pill. --Karen Springen  
From Bookforum *Bad Pharma* is surely the most comprehensive account to date of how the pharmaceutical industry games the regulatory process. Still, *Bad Pharma* is short on practical prescriptions for reform, and it is not until the last ten pages that Goldacre acknowledges that drug companies are manufacturing products that save lives and alleviate pain for billions of people. —Chris Wilson  
Slightly technical, eminently readable, consistently shocking, occasionally hectoring and unapologetically polemical . . . This is a book that deserves to be widely read, because anyone who does read it cannot help feeling both uncomfortable and angry. —The Economist  
Ben

Goldacre has done it again . . . This is a morbidly fascinating and dispiriting account, yet one which deserves (and needs) to be read and acted upon without delay. rdquo; Dennis Rosen, *The Boston Globe* rdquo; Read this book. It will make you mad, it will make you scared. And, hopefully, it will bring about some change. rdquo; Chris Lee, *Ars Technica* rdquo; A thorough piece of investigative medical journalism. What keeps you turning its pages is the accessibility of Goldacre's writing, . . . his genuine, indignant passion, his careful gathering of evidence and his use of stories, some of them personal, which bring the book to life. rdquo; Luisa Dillner, *The Guardian* rdquo; Goldacre's research is scrupulous, and lay readers may find themselves converted by his geeky ardor. rdquo; *The New Yorker* rdquo; [A]n eye-opening glance into a world of experts who have failed us. rdquo; *The New York Times Book* rdquo; In this searing expose of the pharmaceutical industry, physician and journalist Goldacre uncovers a cesspool of corrupt practices designed to sell useless or dangerous drugs to an unsuspecting public . . . Goldacre conveys complicated scientific, medical, and ethical issues in simple, clear, plainspoken language that pulls no punches. The result is a smart, infuriating diagnosis of the rotten heart of the medical-industrial complex. rdquo; *Publishers Weekly* rdquo; A useful guide for policymakers, doctors and the patients who need protection against deliberate disinformation. rdquo; *Kirkus* rdquo; Goldacre's essential expose will prompt readers to ask more questions before automatically popping a doctor-prescribed pill. rdquo; Karen Springen, *Booklist* rdquo; Smart, funny, clear, unflinching: Ben Goldacre is my hero. rdquo; Mary Roach, author of *Stiff*, *Spook*, and *Bonk*, on *Bad Science* rdquo; Ben Goldacre is exasperated . . . He is irked, vexed, bugged, ticked off at sometimes inadvertent (because of stupidity) but more often deliberate deceptions perpetrated in the name of science . . . You'll get a good grounding in the importance of evidence-based medicine . . . 'Studies show' is not good enough, he writes: 'The plural of "anecdote" is not data.' rdquo; Katherine Bouton, *The New York Times*, on *Bad Science* rdquo; One of the best books I've ever read. It completely changed the way I saw the world. And I actually mean it. rdquo; Tim Harford, author of *The Undercover Economist*, on *Bad Science* rdquo; Ben Goldacre lucidly, and irreverently, debunks a frightening amount of pseudoscience, from cosmetics to dietary supplements to alternative medicine. If you want to read one book to become a better-informed consumer and citizen, read *Bad Science*. rdquo; Sandeep Jauhar, author of *Intern*, on *Bad Science* rdquo; This is a much-needed book. Ben Goldacre shows us--with hysterical wit--how to separate the scam artists from real science. In a world of misinformation, this is a rare gem. rdquo; Timothy Ferriss, author of *The 4-Hour Workweek*, on *Bad Science* rdquo; Ben Goldacre uses a brilliant mix of science and wit to challenge and investigate alternative therapists and the big pharmaceutical corporations. *Bad Science* is an invaluable tool for anybody who wants to protect themselves from the snake-oil salesmen of the twenty-first century. rdquo; Simon Singh, author of *Big Bang* and *Fermat's Last Theorem*, on *Bad Science* rdquo; British physician and journalist Ben Goldacre takes aim at quack doctors, pharmaceutical companies and poorly designed studies in extraordinary fashion in *Bad Science* . . . Goldacre shines in a chapter about bad scientific studies by writing it from the perspective of a make-believe big pharma researcher who needs to bring a mediocre new drug to market. He explains exactly how to skew the data to show a positive result. 'I'm so good at this I scare myself,' he writes. 'Comes from reading too many rubbish trials.' rdquo; Rachel Saslow, *The Washington Post*, on *Bad Science* rdquo; Funny and biting . . . While it is a very entertaining book, it also provides important insight into the horrifying outcomes that can result when willful anti-intellectualism is allowed equal footing with scientific methodology. rdquo; Dennis Rosen, *The Boston Globe*, on *Bad Science* rdquo; I hereby make the heretical argument that it is time to stop cramming kids' heads with the Krebs cycle, Ohm's law, and the myriad other facts that constitute today's science curricula. Instead, what we need to teach is the ability to detect *Bad Science*--BS, if you will. The reason we do science in the first place is so that 'our own atomized experiences and prejudices' don't mislead us, as Ben Goldacre of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine puts it in his new book, *Bad Science: Quacks, Hacks, and Big Pharma Flacks*. Understanding what counts as evidence should therefore trump memorizing the structural formulas for alkanes. rdquo; Sharon Begley, *Newsweek.com*, on *Bad Science* rdquo; Dr. Ben Goldacre's UK bestseller *Bad Science: Quacks, Hacks, and Big Pharma Flacks* is finally in print in the USA, and Americans are lucky to have it. Goldacre writes a terrific *Guardian* column analyzing (and debunking) popular science reporting, and has been a star in the effort to set the record straight on woowoo 'nutritionists,' doctors who claim that AIDS can be cured with vitamins, and vaccination/autism scares. *Bad Science* is more than just a debunking expose (though it's that): it's a toolkit for critical thinking, a primer on statistics and valid study design, a guide to meta-analysis and other tools for uncovering and understanding truth . . . The book should be required reading for everyone who cares about health, science, and public policy. rdquo; *BoingBoing.net* on *Bad Science*