

Dr. Oz, Mark Bittman, and the Quacks of Columbia University



By Alex Berezow — November 30, 2016



Credit: Wikipedia [1]

What is going on at Columbia University? The prestigious school, located in the Upper West Side of New York City, has employed a growing list of quacks that is thoroughly undermining its great reputation.

As our own Dr. Julianna LeMieux [wrote](#) [2] recently, the university just asked Mark Bittman, a controversial food writer, to join the faculty of its School of Public Health. Investigative journalist Jon Entine once [described](#) [3] Mr Bittman as a "scourge on science." Why?

Like Michael Pollan, his former colleague at the *New York Times*, Mr Bittman wages an unscientific war on GMOs. He [calls](#) [4] biotechnology "overrated," and endorses the mandatory labeling of GMOs, a policy rejected by every major mainstream medical and scientific organization in America.

While [claiming not to be vegan](#) [5], he personally profits from evangelizing for vegan food. (He thinks you should eat vegan before 6 pm. [Yes, really](#) [2].) Veganism is essentially a philosophical or religious lifestyle choice; its claimed health benefits are [not supported by scientific evidence](#) [6]. He declared sugar "[toxic](#) [7]," never mind the fact that our bodies are bathed in sugars due to metabolic processes such as glycolysis and gluconeogenesis.

Mr Bittman might make a good marketing professor. Clearly, he has been able to sell junk science to millions of people. But he belongs nowhere near the corridors of a School of Public Health.

However, Mr Bittman is a paragon of scientific virtue compared to TV's Dr Oz, who is also on staff at Columbia University. Mehmet Oz has featured no fewer than [16 weight loss "miracles"](#) [8] on his

show. Dr Oz [believes](#) [9] in talking to the dead and has promoted homeopathic products, which the U.S. government now require to carry a [label warning people that they don't actually work](#) [10]. In [USA Today](#) [11], Dr Oz's colleagues say his "unsubstantiated medicine sullies the reputation of Columbia University."

So does the [Center for Comprehensive Wellness](#) [12], a group at Columbia that promotes alternative quack medicine such as acupuncture, reflexology, and Reiki.

Why is Columbia University doing this? It's certainly not in pursuit of academic excellence. Mr Bittman holds no postgraduate degree, and Dr Oz is widely mocked. And it's certainly not to increase its research output. The only fathomable explanation is that hiring famous people and embracing phony medicine increases its popularity and fattens its bottom line. In pursuit of the Almighty Dollar, Columbia University is killing scientific truth. Perhaps students ought to consider that before forking over [\\$220K for four-year tuition](#) [13].

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Links

[1]

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbia_University#/media/File:Low_Memorial_Library_Columbia_University_NYC_retou

[2] <http://acsh.org/news/2016/11/17/what-think-about-mark-bittman-joining-columbias-school-public-health-10449>

[3] <https://www.geneticliteracyproject.org/2013/04/15/on-gmos-new-york-times-foodie-mark-bittman-is-a-dark-cloud-in-the-brightening-sky-of-reason/>

[4] <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/07/opinion/bittman-leave-organic-out-of-it.html>

[5] <http://markbittman.com/why-im-not-a-vegan/>

[6] <https://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/vegan-betrayal-the-myths-vs-the-realities-of-a-plants-only-diet/>

[7] <http://www.acsh.org/news/2015/09/14/let-them-eat-kale-bittman-bids-farewell-to-the-new-york-times>

[8]

http://www.realclearscience.com/blog/2014/01/dr_oz_has_featured_no_less_than_16_weight_loss_miracles_why_is_th

[9] <http://www.forbes.com/sites/jeffbercovici/2013/01/28/dr-ozs-five-wackiest-medical-beliefs/#5013e3ca3e7d>

[10] <http://www.acsh.org/news/2016/11/17/ftc-tightens-homeopathic-products-10446>

[11] <http://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2015/04/23/dr-oz-show-columbia-doctors-call-for-resignation-column/26179443/>

[12] <http://ccw.columbia.edu/patient-care/integrative-therapies/>

[13] <http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges/columbia-university-2707>