

Quack Alert! ACSH's Most Controversial Articles of 2017



By Alex Berezow, PhD — December 27, 2017



Credit: Storyblocks [1]

ACSH is in the business of promoting evidence-based science and debunking junk science. That rubs some people the wrong way.

Take Dr. Oz, for instance. He got really upset when we called him a quack and called on Columbia University to throw him out. But he is a quack. If that bothers him, then there are two solutions available: (1) Stop being a quack; or (2) Fully embrace quackery. Go all in. As Byron Katie would say, "Love what is." Love your quackery, Dr. Oz.

As it turns out, Americans may have already figured out that Dr. Oz is a snake oil salesman. [His ratings are down about 70% from five years ago](#) [2]. Hopefully, Dr. Oz will soon be on his way out, and we'll gladly take credit for that.

But that controversy was so 2015. It's 2017, and we've irritated a lot of other quacks and charlatans this year, and their supporters let us know about it in the comments section. Here are our most controversial articles of 2017:

#1. [Infographic: The Best And Worst Science News Sites.](#) [3] Many news outlets that consider themselves "reputable," such as the *New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and *TIME*, are purveyors of pseudoscientific garbage. This article didn't go over well with the journalists who work at those junk science media outlets, but we did get mentioned by *Nature* in a [strange editorial that was equal parts finger-wagging and humblebragging](#) [4].

#2. ['The Lancet' Praises Karl Marx In Bizarre Editorial.](#) [5] Some people -- almost exclusively those who never had to live under it -- really love communism. Despite killing roughly 100 million

people, the communist ideology is alive and well, even at *The Lancet*.

#3. The Top 100 Academic Journals Contain Little Social Science. [6] Social science journals are often full of dubious research that confirms preexisting political and sociological biases and does little to advance human knowledge. Unsurprisingly, social science journals aren't well represented in the top 100 academic journals. That [rather obvious statement upset PZ Myers](#) [7].

#4. A Naturopath's Human Experiment Ends In Death [8]. Coffee goes in your mouth, not in your butt. [Some misguided people believe the opposite to be true](#) [9]. Similarly, the spice turmeric goes in your mouth, not in your veins. However, a naturopath injected turmeric directly into a young woman's veins and killed her.

#5. Turmeric: The New Superfood. Oops. Superfad. [10] There's nothing magical about turmeric. It's a nice spice. That's about it. Any claims of its "superfood" status are based on hype. Pointing that out is strangely upsetting to a lot of people.

#6. FDA Call For Comments On Genetically Edited Food. [11] Anything that involves genetically engineered food is guaranteed to set off a firestorm of insanity. Dr. Julianna LeMieux simply explained how people can submit comments to the FDA in regard to concerns the agency was seeking from the public in regard to genome editing (CRISPR) technology. That alone was enough to send some people to the psychiatrists' office.

#7. How Chemistry Implicated Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad. [12] Dr. Josh Bloom explained the chemistry of the sarin gas attack unleashed by Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad on his own people. This was troubling to many conspiracy theorists who think that Assad didn't actually murder his own people.

#8. Is Tylenol 'By Far The Most Dangerous Drug Ever Made?' [13] Anytime a discussion of the shortcomings of a particular drug is discussed, a chorus of pharmaceutical conspiracy theorists usually makes an appearance.

#9. Stop Mommy-Shaming Pregnant Women Who Have A Glass Of Wine. [14] The job of busybodies on Twitter is to make pregnant women feel horrible about themselves. We defended women against such shaming.

#10. Smoking Is the Hitler of Epidemiology. [15] Some people have real trouble understanding analogies.

Because we are endlessly dedicated to promoting truth and exposing lies, surely we will have another compelling list of controversial articles for 2018. Stay tuned!

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[1] <https://www.storyblocks.com/stock-image/angry-businessman-shouting-on-smartphone-baivnjoqu-j6gugtf1>

- [2] <https://www.inquisitr.com/4260789/have-viewers-had-enough-of-dr-oz/>
- [3] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/03/05/infographic-best-and-worst-science-news-sites-10948>
- [4] <https://www.nature.com/news/science-journalism-can-be-evidence-based-compelling-and-wrong-1.21591>
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- [7] <https://freethoughtblogs.com/pharyngula/2017/05/24/now-thats-an-interesting-variation-of-the-argumentum-ad-populum/>
- [8] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/03/23/naturopaths-human-experiment-ends-death-11039>
- [9] <http://s2.quickmeme.com/img/be/bedb61eb869de4d7344492e7526ef170bfbfd39765147ee02d2db54e95f8e731.jpg>
- [10] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/01/14/turmeric-new-superfood-oops-superfad-10732>
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