

Scientific American Publishes Conspiratorial, Anti-Medical Rant Aimed at Dr. Jennifer Gunter



By Alex Berezow, PhD — December 2, 2019

In the past few months, Scientific American published an article that attacked biotechnology, another that repeated conspiratorial nonsense about 5G technology, and a third that went on an anti-medical rant aimed at a high-profile gynecologist.



Credit: Public Domain/Wikipedia [1]

For *Scientific American*, the year 2019 will go down in history, but certainly not in the way the 174-year-old publication intended. After publishing at least two thoroughly unscientific and inept articles, SciAm has produced a third.

In August, SciAm published an article that made one outrageous claim after another. For instance, the authors wrote that climate change was turning vegetables into sugary snacks; GMOs and glyphosate are responsible for a multitude of chronic diseases, from diabetes to autism; and the true pathway to health is to tinker around with our gut microbiome. As I [wrote](#) [2] at the time, "I've never before seen an article that so egregiously twisted and misrepresented a whole host of sciences -- from nutrition and agriculture to biotechnology and microbiology."

SciAm was rightly pilloried on Twitter, so it issued a "correction" that was only marginally better than the original dumpster fire. But at least SciAm learned its lesson, right?

Nope. SciAm then published an article by a bona fide conspiracy theorist, Joel Moskowitz, [claiming that 5G wireless technology is unsafe](#)

[3]. Dr. Moskowitz also believes that cell phones and Wi-Fi are dangerous and that the State of California is [hiding evidence that supports his crackpot belief](#) [4]. Once again, SciAm's conspiracy-mongering was criticized, but the outlet issued no correction this time.

Third Time's a Charm: SciAm Publishes Anti-Medical Rant

Now, SciAm has really stepped in it. A few days ago, it published an article (now deleted but [eternally accessible](#) [5]) criticizing the high-profile gynecologist Dr. Jennifer Gunter in a bizarre, anti-medical rant.

The author, Jennifer Block, seemed to take exception to Dr. Gunter's rejection of a book called *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, which Block applauded as, "A book written for women by women—and *not* by doctors." In Block's opinion, the book is truly excellent because it rejects medical expertise. Yes, that's what she really wrote. You have to read it to believe it:

*"It disrupted the whole notion of expertise, or what scholars call "authoritative knowledge": women sat in circles and talked about their experiences with their own bodies; they took off their pants and looked at their own and each other's cervixes, they shared long-standing home remedies that had rarely been codified or perhaps ever written down, and they compared all this gathered wisdom to what men in white coats had been telling them and doing to them. They wrote books like Our Bodies, Ourselves as a corrective: **Sorry, no, you are not the experts of us. We'll consider your opinions, but henceforth you will not have a monopoly on our health, thanks.**" [Emphasis added]*

In other words, Block is saying that women don't need medical doctors because the lessons learned from staring at each others' vulvas while sharing anecdotes about herbal remedies is every bit as legitimate as the lessons doctors learn in medical school. This is not only insane but dangerous to women's health. Hucksters like [Gwyneth Paltrow](#) [6] use precisely the same chicanery to sell snake oil to people who don't know any better.

Block goes on to denounce "authority" (which apparently means anyone with an evidence-based opinion) because it ignores "people's lived experiences." *Lived experience* is simply a different way of saying "anecdote." Block clearly believes that scientific research is just one opinion among many. Sure, doctors might believe one thing, but Karen on Facebook disagrees. And her opinion counts too.

via [MEME](#) [7]

Just for good measure, Block defends the practice of women jamming jade eggs into their vaginas because... well, why not? There's no evidence of harm, she claims. So ladies, go ahead and cram anything you want in there.

Is Scientific American Just Trolling Us, Now?

We have a sickness in our country which Tom Nichols captured in his book *The Death of Expertise*

. Not only do Americans ignore experts, they routinely mock them. Unbelievably, once prestigious outlets like *Scientific American* now give these know-nothings a platform. Thank goodness people like Dr. Jennifer Gunter have the courage to fight back against the dangerous nonsense.

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Links

[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientific_American#/media/File:SciAmer.gif

[2] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2019/08/20/scientific-american-says-vegetables-are-toxic-sugary-snacks-14234>

[3] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2019/10/21/scientific-american-says-5g-dangerous-vegetables-are-junk-food-14351>

[4] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/02/28/uc-berkeley-psychologist-joel-moskowitz-cell-phone-wi-fi-truther-10928>

[5] <https://web.archive.org/web/20191127013500/https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/doctors-are-not-gods/>

[6] <https://www.acsh.org/tags/gwyneth-paltrow>

[7] <https://me.me>