

What I'm Reading (Jan. 28)



By *Chuck Dinerstein, MD, MBA* — January 28, 2021

Identifying the rioters at the Capital demonstrates the end of privacy, the bad-boys of healthcare 2020, the natural and un-natural in medicine, and an example of "misinformation" spread not on social media, but by a beetle.



Image courtesy of Perfecto Capucine on Pixabay [1]

I have written extensively on privacy in the digital age, especially concerning healthcare. I suspect my concerns and those of many others are a little belated, and there is no better example than the “manhunt” for those rioting at the Capital. Those who took selfies are identified by facial recognition; those that featured their behavior on their social media are easily identified. There are those GPS units that we carry about, our cellphones, and I would not be surprised if the Capital didn’t deploy the same geofencing systems that allow lawyers to identify phone numbers in Emergency Departments. I am not talking about the low-hanging fruit of digital breadcrumbs. The Brookings Institute covers a few surprising sources of those crumbs in their article, [Digital fingerprints are identifying Capitol rioters](#) [2].

Do you remember Martin Shkreli, pharm bro, the one that raised the price of a medication from \$13 to \$750 and subsequently has gone to jail over SEC violations? Well, his life is not just about dishonor; the Lown Institute [1] has named their annual awards for the bad-boys in healthcare after him. This year's "winners" range from private equity firms to the federal PPE program. [Here](#) [3] is the full listing, and [here](#) [4] the dishonorable mentions.

“Physicians need to be given time to listen to their patients – not necessarily because that will allow them to identify and cure illnesses more easily, but because being invited to tell your story is an essential part of the healing process. Mainstream medicine needn’t swap scientific naturalism for natural medicine’s contradictory grab bag of anti-establishment inclusivity. But it would do well to address the need for metaphysical consolation that explains why patients seek out natural medicine despite those contradictions.”

From Aeon, a piece that tries to health rift between natural and not. It gets to the heart of medicine, its artful application, not its tools. It helps us understand the allure of natural, non-Western therapies. [Natural and unnatural](#) [5]

“Biologists are accustomed to hearing stories of microbes manipulating their host – a fungus that turns ants into suicidal zombies, a protozoan that makes rats seek out cat urine – but there are few examples of hosts turning the tables on their microbes.

My colleagues and I just published a paper that demonstrated that the burying beetle, *Nicrophorus orbicollis*, found in eastern North America, alters the odors produced by microbes from their subterranean nest to thwart competitors that would steal the beetles’ cache.”

As it turns out, disinformation is not limited to social networks like Facebook or Twitter. In some ways, they seem to be natural as this article, [Beetle parents manipulate information broadcast from bacteria in a rotting corpse](#) [6], from The Conversation reveals.

[1] The Lown Institute is a think-tank on healthcare reform and justice – they are big on “Do no harm.”

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[1] <https://pixabay.com/photos/cocooning-read-reading-book-books-3723563/>

[2] <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/techtank/2021/01/19/digital-fingerprints-are-identifying-capitol-rioters/>

[3] <https://lowninstitute.org/projects/shkreli-awards/2020-shkreli-awards/>

[4] <https://lowninstitute.org/2020shkreli-awards-dishonorable-mentions/>

[5] https://aeon.co/essays/natural-healing-is-metaphysically-incoherent-but-valuable?utm_medium=feed&utm_source=rss-feed

[6] <https://theconversation.com/beetle-parents-manipulate-information-broadcast-from-bacteria-in-a-rotting-corpse-151447>