Although it was released just yesterday, Dr. Paul Offit’s masterpiece Do You Believe in Magic is already having quite an impact, as demonstrated by a very comprehensive article by Liz Szabo in yesterday’s USA Today.

Dr. Offit, who is the Chief of Infectious Disease at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (and one of our trustees at ACSH), is a pioneer in public health who was a co-inventor of RotaTeq, a vaccine against rotavirus a gastrointestinal infection that kills tens of thousands of children per year, especially in developing countries.

Just for a change of pace, we are publishing ACSH’s Dr. Josh Bloom’s Amazon review of the book, which thoroughly obliterates so-called alternative medicine, while at the same time explains how much of it got started facts that are often astounding. Here is the review.

5.0 out of 5 stars Brilliant, unless you are a muddled thinker or conspiracy idiot. June 19, 2013

Josh Bloom (New York)

This review is from: Do You Believe in Magic?: The Sense and Nonsense of Alternative Medicine (Hardcover)

There are two types of mentalities in the conventional vs. alternative medicine debate: 1) Those who can think for themselves, and 2) Those who cannot. The latter group starts with a faulty conclusion and works backwards, guaranteeing that they will eventually paint themselves into a corner from which no logic will escape. For example: Pharmaceutical industries are evil. Therefore anything that comes from the companies will be a) good for them, and b) bad for you. Furthermore anyone who has done any research leading to new drugs or who has a positive opinion about what these companies do is either corrupt or close-minded, and driven solely by money. If you are a #2, skip this book. It will be lost on you. And you won’t believe any of it anyhow.

But if you are a #1, this is one of the best-written and most important books in a generation. Do NOT miss it.

Offit’s meticulous dismantling of the pervasive fraud that surrounds us is not only convincing, but also fills in gaps in knowledge that those of us in the public health field have missed. One quote sums up the book perfectly: There is no such thing as alternative medicine. There’s only medicine that works and medicine that doesn’t. And he goes on to demonstrate time after time how this country is turning into one idiotic sucker for Oprah and her little friends, while ignoring “real”
science and medical research which will prolong your life, and save the lives of millions of children in developing countries.

On a final note, ACSH's Dr. Josh Bloom says, I know Paul Offit personally and professionally. The conspiracy lunatics can claim what they want about Offit's motives for writing the book, and for his own research money. But I can tell you without a shadow of a doubt that Offit is one of the most dedicated, ethical people I have ever had the honor of knowing. Listen to him speak and, unless you simply are unable to go outside of your dogma comfort zone, you will hear a brilliant man who is passionately dedicated to public health and saving lives from preventable diseases. Money isn't even remotely a factor.

He goes on: This book is a must, especially if you want to learn about what really drives the quack industry (money, celebrities, ignorance, and distrust). Read it and you may see things quite differently. Or, if you want to keep sticking needles in your eye (or wherever) for absolutely no reason, knock yourself out.

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