

# Dr. Ozvorkian gets busted again. You are better off flipping a coin.

By ACSH Staff — December 19, 2014



When Dr. Oz eventually goes to the magic fat burner in the sky, he may

reflect upon the past few months and conclude that there may have been better times in his professional life.

The former golden boy of TV medicine has not really contributed all that much to public health, but he has inadvertently revived a previously-defunct science: alchemy. Defying all rules of chemistry, he seems to have stumbled upon a way to actually transform elements!

Except in this case, the transformation hasn't been lead to gold. It is more like gold to tin.

And, as anyone with a passable knowledge of chemistry will tell you, gold does not tarnish. But tin certainly does, although maybe not as quickly as Oz's reputation. And it is all self-inflicted.

His slump began in earnest back in June, when he was [turned into cat food](#) <sup>[1]</sup> by Senator Claire McCaskill (D-MO) during a hearing at which he was tricked into believing that he was testifying about making dietary supplements safer. It didn't exactly turn out that way, as ACSH's Dr. Josh Bloom noted in his [Science 2.0 piece](#) <sup>[2]</sup> entitled *The Lizard of Oz Takes His Own Medicine*.

Things did not improve later that month, when [John Oliver's video](#) <sup>[3]</sup> from HBO's *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* came out. We at ACSH have seen quite a few people look bad once they are put under the scientific microscope, but this is an entirely different animal. We *cannot even imagine* how it would be possible to look worse than Oz did while being thoroughly eviscerated during the 15 minute segment.

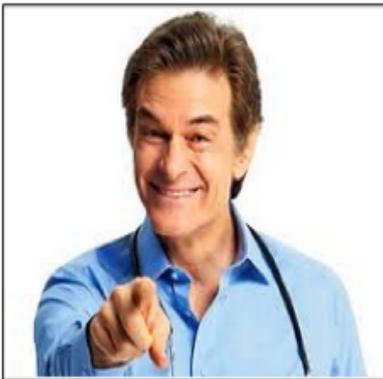
His very bad year did not improve a whole lot earlier this week, when an [article](#) [4] in the December 17th *British Medical Journal* examined the veracity of the doctor's advice. Having dealt with quacks, liars, lunatics and self-serving, dishonest groups and individuals for more than three decades, it is very difficult to surprise us. Difficult yes, impossible no.

A group from the University of Alberta, which was led by Dr. Christina Korownyk, an associate professor of family medicine, proved this. The group examined how often Oz's advice was backed by legitimate medicine. To do so, Korownyk's group looked at 80 recommendations made by Oz over the course of 40 shows, and compared them to established medical advice. The results are beyond belief:

- Of the roughly 80 recommendations made by Oz over the course of the 40 shows in question, medical evidence supported only *46 percent of them*.
- Thirty-nine percent of the time there was no medical evidence found to either refute or support his claims.
- Fifteen percent of the time, Oz's recommendations actually contradicted medical evidence.

If this doesn't sound great to you, you are not alone. In fact, the following image came to mind (for non-biologists, the thing in the middle is an amoeba):

### Approximate odds of getting correct medical advice from the following entities:



46%



50%



God only knows

Yet, this is how [about three million people](#) [5] get their medical advice a fact that is no doubt Christmas to the \$20+ billion supplements industry 365 days per year.

Dr. Bloom concludes: There is really nothing new here, but I m beginning to sense for the first time that some people are actually starting to catch on to the fact that all is not as it seems they have been consuming a diet of worthless (and/or dangerous) supplements, simply because they sound good and are being shoved down their throats (forgive the pun) by people and companies that stand to make a very large amount of money when myths and garbage are perpetuated. Maybe this will open a few more eyes, although there is probably a supplement for that too.

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**Links**

[1]

[http://www.slate.com/blogs/weigel/2014/06/17/sen\\_claire\\_mccaskill\\_dissects\\_dr\\_oz\\_for\\_weight\\_loss\\_scams.html](http://www.slate.com/blogs/weigel/2014/06/17/sen_claire_mccaskill_dissects_dr_oz_for_weight_loss_scams.html)

[2] [http://www.science20.com/pfired\\_but\\_still\\_kicking/the\\_lizard\\_of\\_oz\\_takes\\_his\\_own\\_medicine-138874](http://www.science20.com/pfired_but_still_kicking/the_lizard_of_oz_takes_his_own_medicine-138874)

[3] <http://www.awardsdaily.com/tv/john-oliver-destroys-dr-oz-with-bonus-tap-dancing-buscemi/>

[4] <http://www.bmj.com/content/349/bmj.g7346>

[5] <http://tvbythenumbers.zap2it.com/2012/10/23/syndicated-tv-ratings-judge-judy-is-number-1-in-households-wheel-of-fortune-on-top-in-total-viewers-dr-phil-retains-top-talker-spot-for-week-of-october-8/154308/>