

Last Week At Science-Based Medicine

Written by Dr. Harriet Hall
Monday, 17 September 2012 09:00

Here is a recap of the stories that appeared last week at [Science-Based Medicine](#), a multi-author skeptical blog that separates the science from the woo in medicine.

Fairy Tale Science and Placebo Medicine (Harriet Hall) <http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/index.php/fairy-tale-science-and-placebo-medicine/>

A video of Dr. Hall's presentation on complementary and alternative medicine at the 6th

World Skeptics Congress in Berlin, May 2012.

Is shameless self-promotion of your science a good idea? (David Gorski) <http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/index.php/another-cancer-treatment/>

Some scientists oversell the meaning and importance of their research using techniques similar to the ones quacks use to pitch their wares. They try to impress the public and influence potential providers of research funds. Hype and self-promotion are not appropriate in science.

Learning from Animals: Evolutionary Medicine with a Twist (Harriet Hall) <http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/index.php/learning-from-animals-evolutionary-medicine-with-a-twist/>

A cardiologist has written a new book,

Zoobiquity

, about the similarities between human and animal diseases. She explains what we can learn from ancient penises, dead crows, and koalas with the clap; studying our animal relatives can provide valuable clues about human illnesses and behaviors.

An Acupuncture Meta-Analysis (Steven Novella) <http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/index.php/an-acupuncture-meta-analysis/>

A new meta-analysis is being hyped as proof that acupuncture works. Its conclusions are flawed due to bias, inadequate blinding, and nonspecific effects of treatment. The small effect they found is probably not clinically significant and doesn't support the use of acupuncture as a legitimate medical intervention.

Magnesium: The cure to all disease? (Scott Gavura) <http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/index.php/magnesium-the-cure-to-all-disease/>

Magnesium supplements are popular. They have been claimed to cure or prevent practically everything, from asthma to cancer. Magnesium does have legitimate medical uses; but it is

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readily available in food, and supplementation is unnecessary in the absence of a confirmed deficiency or specific medical indication.

Acupuncture: NCCAM Calls California's Bluff (Ben Kavoussi) <http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/index.php/acupuncture-nccam-calls-californias-bluff/>

A California Department of Consumer Affairs "Consumer's Guide" on acupuncture falsely claimed that it was endorsed by the NIH. Several times over the last 3 years Ben Kavoussi gave them a letter from the NIH stating that it does not endorse any product, service or treatment; but they refused to change the booklet. Finally, after an explicit critical letter from the Deputy Director, NCCAM, NIH, California eventually withdrew the booklet.