

Last Week At Science-Based Medicine

Written by Dr. Harriet Hall
Monday, 05 November 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.

NIH funds training in behavioral intervention to slow progression of cancer by improving the immune system (James Coyne) <http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/index.php/nih-funds-training-in-behavioral-intervention-to-slow-progression-of-cancer/>

The NIH is funding training in psychoneuroimmunological interventions for cancer, questionable treatments based on flawed studies. This highlights the pseudoscience and heavy-handed politics in this field. There is no credible evidence that any psychosocial intervention reduces risk of cancer recurrence or improves survival.

Andrew Weil/AAFP Article Rejected by Slate (Harriet Hall) <http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/index.php/andrew-weilaafp-article-rejected-by-slate/>

Slate magazine asked Dr. Hall to write an article criticizing the selection of Andrew Weil as keynote speaker for the American Academy of Family Physicians scientific assembly (akin to asking an astrologer to speak at an astronomy meeting). The text of that article is presented, followed by an account of the editorial concerns that led to its rejection.

Cyborg Therapeutics (Steven Novella) <http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/index.php/cyborg-therapeutics/>

There are promising new developments in the use of computer controlled robotics for therapeutic purposes. A robotic exoskeleton for paraplegics allows them to sit, stand, and walk. It is muscle-activated, but brain-activated applications are in the works.

CAM and Creationism: Separated at Birth? (Jann Bellamy) <http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/index.php/cam-and-creationism-separated-at-birth/>

Arguments in support of creationism/creation science/intelligent design and CAM have much in common: the same logical fallacies, sub-par thinking, and lack of good science. Numerous examples are presented.

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The Light Fantastical (Mark Crislip) <http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/index.php/the-light-fantastic/>

Many claims are made for treating everything from allergies to cancer by removing small quantities of blood, “irradiating” it with UV light or lasers, and returning it to the body. This amounts to a homeopathic application of light. There is no evidence to support its effectiveness, and the rationales presented for possible mechanisms are implausible.