

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.

A Holiday Round In The Mammography Debate (David Gorski) <http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/index.php/a-holiday-round-in-the-mammography-debate/> - more-23584

A study reports that screening mammography leads to over-diagnosis and unnecessary treatment of 1 in 3 women diagnosed with cancer, because many small, early lesions would never have threatened the patient's life. We have no way of knowing which ones those are. Over-diagnosis is a problem, but mammography screening does save lives and this study is not a reason to reject it.

Ecstasy for PTSD: Not Ready for Prime Time (Harriet Hall) <http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/index.php/ecstasy-for-ptsd-not-ready-for-prime-time/>

An unwarranted degree of enthusiasm has been generated by a small pilot study of women victims of sexual assault showing that adding the party drug MDMA to psychotherapy improved the outcome for patients with refractory PTSD. It appears to be promising but raises a lot of questions, and recommending it to military veterans is not yet justified.

Homeopathic Vaccines Revisited (Steven Novella) <http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/index.php/homeopathic-vaccines-revisited/>

The idea that homeopathic treatments are meant to be “complementary” to real medicine is a fiction. Of 10 homeopathic clinics surveyed, all 10 advised homeopathic treatment for malaria prevention instead of effective prophylaxis with drugs. 40% of homeopaths specifically advised against getting the MMR vaccine. Believing in medical pseudoscience leads to harm.

Journal of Clinical Oncology editorial: “Compelling” evidence acupuncture “may be” effective for cancer related fatigue (James Coyne) <http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/index.php/journal-of-clinical-oncology-editorial-compelling-evidence-acupuncture-may-be-effective-for-cancer-related-fatigue/>

The JCO is a high impact journal with an unfortunate policy: letters to the editor can't be printed unless authors agree to respond, which conveniently allows authors to squash any criticism. A flawed study on acupuncture for cancer-related fatigue deserved strong criticism. Instead, it was supported by an editorial declaring that there is compelling (?) evidence, not that acupuncture works, but that it “may” work; the author even went so far as to recommend a specific protocol.

Last Week In Science-Based Medicine

Written by Dr. Harriet Hall

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Oregon Naturopaths v. Evidence-Based Medicine (Jann Bellamy) <http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/index.php/oregon-naturopaths-v-evidence-based-medicine/>

In Oregon, coordinated care organizations are tasked with providing evidence-based medicine. They don't think naturopaths are evidence-based enough to qualify for empanelment as primary care providers. Naturopaths protested with a media campaign, got a 90-day reprieve, and if they are excluded after that, the state will still have to pay for naturopathic care outside the managed care system.

Down the Virtual Rabbit Hole (Mark Crislip) <http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/index.php/down-the-virtual-rabbit-hole/>

Nonsensical CAM offerings like Kangan Water and Protozoan FL1953 are reminiscent of Alice's trip down the rabbit hole. Their claims are "curiouser and curiouser" and venture into some alternate reality.