

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-woo in medicine.

An open letter to Penn and Teller about their appearance on *The Dr. Oz Show* (David Gorski) [ht](#)

[tp://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/index.php/open-letter-to-penn-teller/](http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/index.php/open-letter-to-penn-teller/)

Penn and Teller are well known for their skepticism, but they let their fans down when they appeared on the show of the very non-skeptical Dr. Oz. The segment was pointless, debunking only banal myths like the idea that swallowed bubblegum takes 7 years to digest. They offered the appearance of support to Oz, who promotes all kinds of quackery on his show, some of which is potentially harmful to viewers.

Death as a Foodborne Illness Curable by Veganism (Harriet Hall) <http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/index.php/death-as-a-foodborne-illness-curable-by-veganism/>

A doctor who advocates veganism has produced a video claiming that death is a foodborne illness, and that all the major causes of death can be prevented or treated by avoiding foods of animal origin. The studies he cites are cherry-picked and misinterpreted, and he omits any discussion of other studies that got different results. The evidence for a plant-based diet with limited meat is compelling; the evidence for total avoidance of meat, milk and eggs is not.

Mouse Model of Sepsis Challenged (Steven Novella) <http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/index.php/mouse-model-of-sepsis-challenged/>

The mouse model used in studies of sepsis, trauma, and infection has been questioned. Studies of gene activation have shown differences between the mouse immune system and the human. This doesn't mean that animal models are not useful; it shows how science works to constantly re-evaluate old assumptions.

Who takes dietary supplements, and why? (Scott Gavura) <http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/index.php/who-takes-dietary-supplements-and-why/>

Increasing numbers of Americans take multivitamins and other dietary supplement, despite a lack of good evidence showing benefit. The reasons people give are not evidence-based, and only 25% of users said they would stop using a supplement if it was evaluated and found to be ineffective. Public perceptions of safety and effectiveness are not accurate.

Written by Dr. Harriet Hall
Monday, 18 February 2013 09:00

Picking Cherries in Science: The Bio-Initiative Report (Kenneth R. Foster and Lorne Trottier) <http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/index.php/picking-cherries-in-science-the-bio-initiative-report/>

The Bio-Initiative Report is a biased evaluation of the health and biological effects of electromagnetic fields of the sort that are produced by power lines, cell phone, Wi-Fi, etc. It is based on cherry-picked studies and disagrees with other expert reviews that have consistently failed to find clear evidence of health hazards. The BIR's 29 authors did not agree on any unanimous conclusions, and some of them had their own agendas and conflicts of interest.