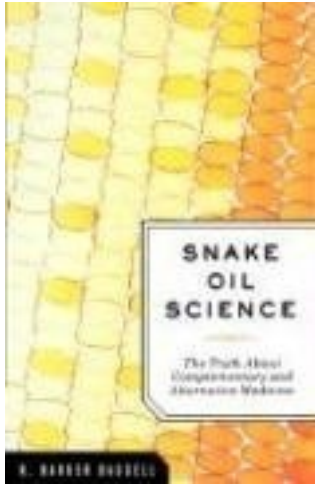


Snake Oil Science



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Hailed in the New York Times as "entertaining and immensely educational," Snake Oil Science is not only a brilliant critique of alternative medicine, but also a first-rate introduction to interpreting scientific research of any sort. The book's ultimate goal is to illustrate how the placebo effect conspires to make medical therapies appear to be effective--not just to consumers, but to therapists and poorly trained scientists as well. Bausell explores this remarkable phenomenon and explains why research on any therapy that does not factor in the placebo effect (and other placebo-like effects) will inevitably produce false results. Moreover, as the author shows in an impressive survey of research from high-quality scientific journals, studies employing credible placebo controls do not indicate positive effects for alternative therapies beyond those attributable to random chance. Readers will come away from this book with a healthy skepticism of claims about the latest "miracle cure," be it St. John's Wort for depression or acupuncture for chronic pain.

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