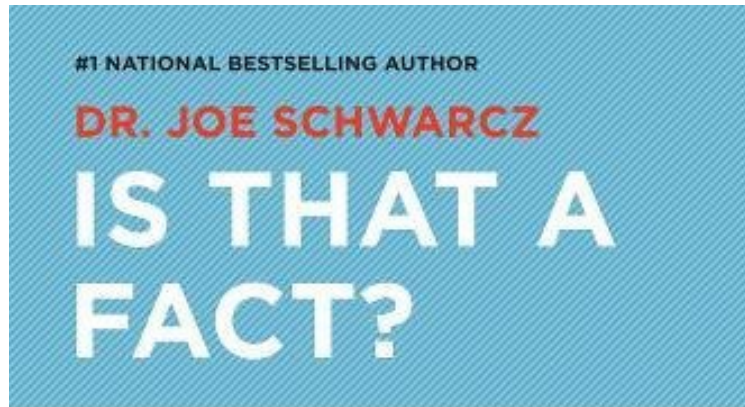


(Download) Is That a Fact?: Frauds, Quacks, and the Real Science of Everyday Life

Is That a Fact?: Frauds, Quacks, and the Real Science of Everyday Life

Joe Schwarcz

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FRAUDS, QUACKS,
and the REAL SCIENCE
of EVERYDAY LIFE

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Joe Schwarcz : Is That a Fact?: Frauds, Quacks, and the Real Science of Everyday Life before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Is That a Fact?: Frauds, Quacks, and the Real Science of Everyday Life:

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. It's OK, have a few issues with it By Ariel This book is nice and falls into the genre of "debunking" books, to which I am particularly attracted. It does deconstruct standard

myth/misinformation about homeopathy, herbal "therapies," the GMO "controversy" (that doesn't exist in rational science), molecular water, and other pseudoscientific topics. He uses a lot of quotes which, while good ones, are kind of noticeable in their number. The writing style can be a bit flip at times, which is a little concerning to me, as these misconceptions are important ones that need to be seriously debunked, and his language might be off-putting enough to those who disagree so as to fuel their determined disagreement. Still, I notice that this is an author who writes material clearly targeted to a lay audience, so perhaps that's why it reads the way it does (eg, it doesn't read like, say, Paul Offit's books on the same topic). As a scientist, I also feel that some sections are incomplete or surprisingly outdated for a recent publication. I suspect that my "issues" with this book probably stem from the fact that I'm not exactly the right target audience, but his content is good, and the message is important.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Lots of Facts By Wendy B. Hanawalt This book starts out strong, attacking some of the most powerful myths of the present day. The author's grounding in scientific research makes him a good person to explain why some ideas are just plain wrong. But towards the end, he veers off into a "fun facts" kind of reporting. He's all over the place, talking about lots and lots and LOTS of little stories you may or may not have heard, and may or may not care much about. But if you're a lover of obscure information, you'll love the whole thing.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The first part of the book discusses what makes for good information. Although By Steven Williams The book explores what is bogus, what has some basis, and what has been shown to be a fact. These are labeled black, gray, and white. The first part of the book discusses what makes for good information. Although, no guarantee, peer-reviewed research is considered the best. And the best of these are controlled experiments, such as double-blinded drug studies with a treatment group and a nontreatment group, which neither the experimenters or the subjects know which group the subjects are in. Some other things that go into how reliable the research is are study size and independent measurements. Studies which rely on questionnaires are less reliable in general. Part two covers the black areas. These are things that are bogus with no real evidence in which to judge the reality of what is being claimed. One example is homeopathy. First through the dilution process nothing of the actual substance remains. Also, the theory behind it has no support. On top of this there has never been a controlled study to show that homeopathic remedies are any better than a placebo. In part three the gray zone is examined. Here there might be a bit of evidence to go on, but under well controlled situations the claims do not stand up. Or the claims are based on extrapolations from either animal studies or small human studies. One issue discussed was antioxidants. Evidence shows that some antioxidants reduced free radicals in the lab, but failed to show any benefit during a clinical trial. Actually free radicals are used by our bodies to attack bacteria and viruses. The giving of large amounts of antioxidant supplements may work to counteract this benefit that our own bodies provide. Part four, the white zone, moves in to territory that science actually supports. Despite this there is often misinformation given about the science and what it means. In this section can be found a good explanation of dry ice (frozen carbon dioxide) and some of its uses. In discussing the hype surrounding blueberries and their ability to reduce breast cancer growth, Dr. Schwarcz says, But for the scientifically minded, the tasty headline may trigger a bout of mental indigestion. I definitely concur. This happened to me. While reading this book, I saw a news story on the benefits of alternative fasting diets. The woman in the story certainly lost a significant amount of weight, but any calorie restriction diet would do the same. There was no mention in the report of the other benefits or any mention of research studies supporting any of the claims. So I took a spin on google and indulged in some actual science. Needless to say, I found very little if any benefit of this mode of diet. I even went through the abstracts that this one website provided, at least through benefit four out of ten, after which I thought there was little point in continuing, since the research referenced didn't come close to supporting the supposed health benefits. This definitely gave me a serious case of mental indigestion. I enjoy this book immensely. As far as pure enjoyment is concerned, this is the best book I have read since early last year (2015). I had actually taken a free online class, Food for Thought, in which Dr Schwarcz was one of the professors. In that class I enjoyed his sense of humor, often wry and pointed. This quality was also exhibited in the book. He is also the director of the Office for Science Society at McGill University where the class originated from. I was impressed when I posted a question on the Office's website, and Dr. Schwarcz responded that same day. I would definitely recommend this book as a starting point in examining health claims. While Dr. Schwarcz could not cover everything (who can?), he does explain what and where to look to find information in evaluating health and other claims. I would also definitely recommend this book for its pure reading pleasure.

Eat this and live to 100. Don't, and die. Today, hyperboles dominate the media, which makes parsing science from fiction an arduous task when deciding what to eat, what chemicals to avoid, and what's best for the environment. In *Is That a Fact?*, bestselling author Dr. Joe Schwarcz carefully navigates through the storm of misinformation to help us separate fact from folly and shrewdness from foolishness. Are GMOs really harmful? Or could they help developing countries? Which miracle weight-loss foods gained popularity through exuberant data dredging? Is BPA dangerous or just a victim of unforgiving media hype? Is organic better? Dr. Joe questions the reliability and motives of experts in this lighthearted but critical look at what's fact and what's plain nonsense.

From Booklist If you combined the rigorous scientific approach of Ben Goldacre (*Bad Science*, 2010) with the enthusiasm and outspoken prose of James Randi (the noted skeptic and debunker), you would have Joe Schwarcz, chemist, science writer, and radio host. Here, in his latest collection of essays, he tackles a wide variety of topics: bogus self-help products, quackery, homeopathy, misinformed celebrities (i.e., celebs who make ridiculous statements because they don't know they're misinformed), fish-oil supplements, weight-loss plans, Dr. Oz, Jamie Oliver, GMOs, and the list goes on. It's important to note, too, that he doesn't take a hard-core debunking tack to everything he discusses: the book is divided into three broad categories called black, gray, and white (black representing things for which there is no scientific evidence, white being those for which there is hard evidence, and gray being those in between). The author's entertaining writing style and clear, precise explanations make the book a joy to read, and his choice of subjects is so wide-ranging that there really is something for everyone here. --David Pitt

Written with a light touch and refreshing humor, this book provides a solid, authoritative starting point for anyone beginning to look at the world with a skeptical eye and a refresher for those further along that path. *Library Journal* "The author's entertaining writing style and clear, precise explanations make the book a joy to read, and his choice of subjects is so wide-ranging that there is really something for everyone here." *Booklist*