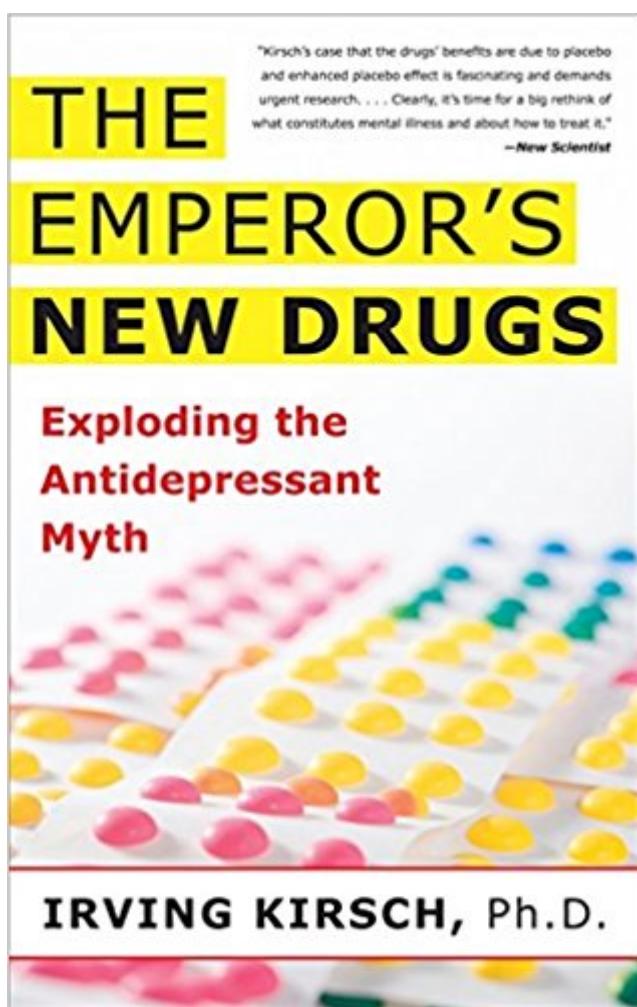


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The Emperor's New Drugs: Exploding The Antidepressant Myth



Synopsis

Irving Kirsch has the world doubting the efficacy of antidepressants. Based on fifteen years of research, *The Emperor's New Drugs* makes an overwhelming case that what the medical community considered a cornerstone of psychiatric treatment is little more than a faulty consensus. But Kirsch does more than just criticize: He offers a path society can follow to stop popping pills and start proper treatment.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. When he began a new research project on antidepressants and placebos (a "meta-analysis" of a large number of published studies), practicing psychotherapist and research psychologist Kirsch (*How Expectancies Shape Experience*) was surprised to uncover evidence that inadequate supervision by the FDA had allowed pharmaceutical companies to cherry-pick test results for publication and submission to the feds, suppressing unwanted outcomes; further, apparent evidence of active drugs' effectiveness when compared to placebos could often be attributed to patients correctly guessing which group they were in based on the side effects (or the lack thereof) they had come to expect in conjunction with anti-depressants. When his results were published in early 2008, Kirsch was surprised to find himself and his research the subject of front page newspaper stories, TV and radio coverage, and a vigorous debate in the medical community that continues to this day. Writing with a broad audience in mind, Kirsch expands on this important topic in a lively style with clear, cogent explanations of the science involved, and many examples of

the differences between solid and flawed research. The result is a fascinating book with broad implications for science policy. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Recent surveys show almost 30 million Americans taking Prozac, Paxil, and their ilk at a cost of more than \$10 billion annually. With decades of persuasive clinical trials and testimonials from patients and physicians attesting to it, such antidepressants' overall effectiveness has long been deemed indisputable by psychiatrists. Yet according to psychologist Kirsch's damning expose of pharmaceutical industry greed, that efficacy is entirely due to the placebo effect. Kirsch makes the bulk of his case by reviewing data from dozens of clinical trials dating back to the 1960s, including ones kept hidden by drug companies, which demonstrate that antidepressants work no better than pills that mimic antidepressants' side effects. Kirsch also dismantles drug company assertions that newer antidepressants, such as serotonin reuptake inhibitors, work by balancing faulty brain chemistry. His contentions have already stirred controversy, including the predictable criticism from Big Pharma. Yet his work is an overdue wake-up call to the psychological professions to begin treating depression with more compassionate methods than expensive pill-popping. --Carl Hays --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

This is a fantastic book that gives an inside look at the effects of antidepressant. In the book, Kirsch shares how he went from being a believer in effects of antidepressant to a doubter and finally a disbeliever. He gives all the evidence to back up his claims, showing that antidepressants are no better than placebo. He also shows that the chemical imbalance theory of depression is severely flawed. He points out that drugs that lower serotonin in the brain work just as well as those that increase serotonin. He also shows that drugs such as benzodiazapines, opiates, and thyroid hormones work equally as well. This all points towards the conclusion that the placebo effect is the real reason for the improvement. When people are given a drug, they expect they will get better. This is an exceptionally written book that will keep you turning the page to uncover more evidence about the science of antidepressants. It's more than just a book about antidepressants, it's a story about how science works and why it is slow to change despite evidence to the contrary.

A MUST read for ANYONE considering..just say no..psychoactive drugs falsely promoted by big pharma. It is appalling that so many primary providers and psychiatrists do not know the truth about these abhorrent chemicals. These drugs are marginally better than placebos and even the slightest edge the non effective drugs have over placebo and placebo effects is marginalized by drug

reps. There is no truth to the brain chemicals imbalance theory. The APA issued those same findings in 2007 and 2009. The drug companies hide the truth about clinical trials and sed cutie reps to provider offices. A must read for professionals and the lay/patient.

Our expectations form some part of our response to any health care treatment. Dr. Kirsch calls this part the placebo effect. How important is it? Kirsch expected the placebo effect to be more important for some treatments than for others. He chose depression as the condition most likely to show a strong placebo response. Kirsch examined the clinical trial data, and found that the placebo effect can easily account for 100% of patients' response to antidepressants. These drugs outperform sugar pills in clinical trials, but only by a small amount, and perhaps only because their side effects are so obvious that participants know when they're getting the real drug. Everyone who is considering antidepressants should read this to understand their treatment options. Psychotherapy, exercise, and herbal treatments are effective without the side effects of drugs.

This is a well researched book that provides shattering evidence from the drug companies own data that convincingly demonstrates that anti depressant medications are no better than placebos. I could not put the book down, and afterwards felt compelled to take action regarding the colossal waste of time and money that has been put into these medications and into fooling governments and the medical profession that they work. I found the book well written, and covers the complex territory in an informative way that can be understood by non professional people. It avoids the sensationalism of the topic by being understated, without the need to provide personal touch case stories to embellish what is a compelling story anyway. I have to invoke the cliche that this is a "life changing" book for anyone who has been touched by the medical profession in the realm of psychiatry.

Everyone should read this book before they put any psych meds into their body. Psych meds are not like Tylenol or antibiotics. They are very serious business, and can cause other, sometimes irreversible side effects. I would advise trying counseling alone before ever taking psych meds.

I chose to read this book as a source for a paper arguing the dangers of antidepressants, and had just finished reading Peter R. Breggin's "The Antidepressant Fact Book" the day before. While Breggin was an extremely credible author, most of his (rather vindictive claims) were supported by his own clinical experience, however he seldom moved beyond "I have seen this in countless patients." Kirsch, on the other hand, is also a credible psychotherapist. Instead of merely taking the

audience's trust for granted however, there wasn't a single salient point in the book that wasn't supported with a medical journal or clinical evidence. I could only count on one hand how many times his evidence seemed flawed or biased. The book was easy to read, objective (unless Kirsch was openly stating what his opinion was), and extremely informative. I never thought I'd actually want to reread a nonfiction piece.

Excellent and ground-breaking. A most hated book in conventional psychiatry circles; a non-technical, highly revealing investigation of the "chemical-imbalance" myth of mental disabilities. Very well researched and argued. A must-read for anyone contemplating Prozac or other SSRI treatment. Nathan Shachar

This book presents a very compelling argument and very well researched argument on the placebo effect, and the effectiveness (or Non-effectiveness) of Antidepressants. IMO these drugs should never have been approved for usage, because the effects are so minimal it's not really worth the side effects. The book gave a very interesting explanation for something called the nocebo effect, a negative placebo. This could be why antidepressants are so hard to quit. People are told they can't get off of them, and then they have withdrawal when going off the drug, so they assume (expect) they can't get off of it. When in reality the help they are receiving is very minimal, and not worth the cost and side effects.

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