
Patients are promised by clinical trial recruiters their participation will help others in the future. What if many of these trials were inaccurately or never reported? Clinicians and patients depend on evidence reported in the medical literature to make treatment decisions. Unreported and manipulated clinical trial data has caused needless suffering and preventable death in patients. This broken promise is the premise of Ben Goldacre’s book Bad Pharma.

Goldacre believes “medicine is broken because the evidence used to make decisions is systematically distorted.” He asserts drug testing, reporting, regulation, and marketing encountered in Europe and North America. The allegations are backed by carefully gathered evidence. Goldacre’s writing style is prosaic, entertaining, and appeals to a wide audience. This nontechnical style does not mean Bad Pharma is not informative to clinicians and scientists. Clinicians will be interested in the descriptions of deceptive marketing tactics used by industry to mold their opinions and practices. The book’s case studies detailing the harm caused to patients by those conducting irresponsible drug trials will give the reader pause if not induce outrage. Goldacre intended this book to unveil the “perversion of science and medicine” and as a call to action for all to “find those responsible and tell them what they have done.” Bad Pharma is a book any clinician or consumer should consider reading.

James M. Burgert, CRNA, DNAP
Adjunct Assistant Professor
US Army Graduate Program in Anesthesia Nursing
Fort Sam Houston, Texas
Associate Scientist
Geneva Foundation
Tacoma, Washington

DISCLOSURES
The author has declared no financial relationships with any commercial interest related to the content of this review. The author did not discuss off-label use within the article.