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100
words

Psychiatry and the pharmaceutical industry

David Healy

Little Pharma made profits by making novel compounds; Big Pharma does it by marketing. Doctors say they consume (prescribe) medication according to the evidence, so marketers design and run trials to increase a drug's use. They select the trials, data and authors that suit, publish in quality journals, facilitate incorporation in guidelines, then exhort doctors to practise evidence-based medicine. Because 'they're worth it', doctors consume branded high-cost but less effective 'evidence-based' derivatives of older compounds making these drugs worth more than their weight in gold. Posted parcels meanwhile are tracked far more accurately than adverse treatment effects on patients.

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