

It's great! Oops, no it isn't

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The truth is, few people know the first thing about clinical research. The public reads about a medical research project that announces unbelievable results for a miraculous drug. Some years later, another investigation completely wipes out those initial favorable findings. For example, a 1994 headline in the San Francisco Chronicle announced "Hormones cut women's risk of heart disease" but by 2001 that optimistic report was reversed as evidenced by a Washington Post article titled, "Hormones don't protect women from heart disease."

People are confused because they do not understand the process behind these conflicting results. A new book can help - *It's Great! Oops, No It Isn't: Why Clinical Research Can't Guarantee The Right Medical Answers* by Ronald Gauch dissects medical research methodology. Through a penetrating inquiry into its triumphs and tragedies, it explains why correct answers are so hard to achieve. What emerges from this inquiry is the unexpected and stunning conclusion that medical researchers can never be sure that they've ended up with a truthful answer. Gauch shows readers why the quest for knowledge through clinical trials is fraught with problems that even the best researchers cannot overcome.

A fascinating gallery of cases illustrates the perils investigators face. Particular emphasis is given to the "clinical trial," the so-called gold standard for medical research. Its seven fatal flaws show succinctly why getting the right research answer is so problematic. In example after example, the author challenges the notion that medical research is too complex for the average citizen to comprehend.

Understanding the imperfect world of clinical research allows the reader to step up and begin to ask his or her own questions, to challenge conclusions, to have doubts and not be afraid to raise them. People who care about their health and the health of others should not be innocent bystanders. They have a right, maybe even an obligation, to become involved. After all, it's their health that is at stake.

Ronald Gauch, Ph.D., spent most of his adult life involved in the application of research methods to clinical investigations. He has been a primary player in important medical studies of major pharmaceutical companies. He has also seen the research world from the academic side at Marist College. He is an excellent presenter, winner of a number of speaking competitions and awarded best teacher recognition on two occasions while at Marist College. As a consultant to the pharmaceutical and healthcare industries, and working with a number of local health-related organizations, he is involved with both the academic and practical world of medical research.

Source: Springer

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