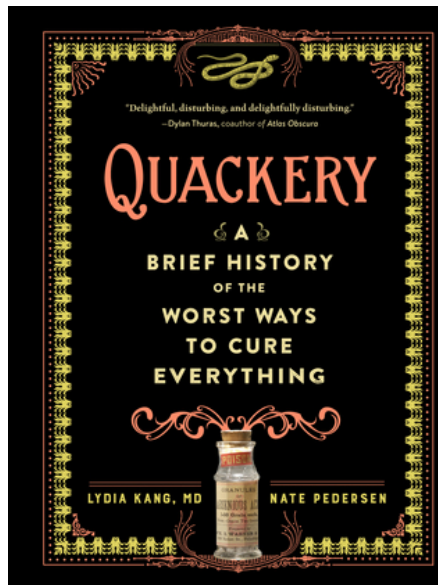




Quackery: A Brief History of the Worst Ways to Cure Everything

Lydia Kang , Nate Pedersen

Download now

Read Online ➔

Quackery: A Brief History of the Worst Ways to Cure Everything

Lydia Kang , Nate Pedersen

Quackery: A Brief History of the Worst Ways to Cure Everything Lydia Kang , Nate Pedersen

Discover 67 shocking-but-true medical misfires that run the gamut from bizarre to deadly. Like when doctors prescribed morphine for crying infants. When snorting skull moss was a cure for a bloody nose. When consuming mail-order tapeworms was a latter-day fad diet. Or when snake oil salesmen peddled strychnine (used in rat poison) as an aphrodisiac in the '60s. Seamlessly combining macabre humor with hard science and compelling storytelling, Quackery is a visually rich and information-packed exploration of history's most outlandish cures, experiments, and scams.

A humorous book that delves into some of the wacky but true ways that humans have looked to cure their ills. Leeches, mercury, strychnine, and lobotomies are a few of the topics that explore what lengths society has gone in the search for health.

Quackery: A Brief History of the Worst Ways to Cure Everything Details

Date : Published October 17th 2017 by Workman Publishing Company

ISBN : 9780761189817

Author : Lydia Kang , Nate Pedersen

Format : Hardcover 344 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, History, Science, Medical, Health, Medicine, Humor, Historical

 [Download Quackery: A Brief History of the Worst Ways to Cure Eve ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Quackery: A Brief History of the Worst Ways to Cure E ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Quackery: A Brief History of the Worst Ways to Cure Everything
Lydia Kang , Nate Pedersen

From Reader Review Quackery: A Brief History of the Worst Ways to Cure Everything for online ebook

Jill Hutchinson says

In the 17th, 18th, or 19th century, if you were sick, call the doctor if you wanted to die more quickly! The horrors of "medical treatment" which even stretched to the early 20th century have to be read about to be believed. It was a guessing game and the patient was the lab rat who rarely survived the "cure". Physicians were obsessed with bleeding (even if your problem was loss of blood); enemas (even if your problem was diarrhea); drilling holes in your skull to release the bad spirits; arsenic and other poisons for everything from tuberculosis to the desire for a glowing complexion; opium to keep your infant from crying; surgeries performed without anesthesia, amputations being a preferred procedure for something as simple as varicose veins.and these are just samples of medical practice of the times.

Hygiene was unknown and more patients died of infection than the disease from which they were suffering. Medical knowledge was very slow in its development, sometimes due to the social restriction of the era. For example, women were examined fully clothed since it was frowned upon for them to be naked in front of men other than their husbands.

Quackery may not be the best title for this book since the medical procedures in common use were considered to be ethical and acceptable. But of course, there were those who took advantage and publicized such devices as electric belts, cure-all potions (usually laudanum), penis enlargers, and radium tablets. Without the FDA and other watchdogs, the charlatan had a free hand in introducing miracle cures to an unsuspecting public.

This is a fascinating look at medical history and only lost one star in the the rating for some distracting "cute" humor. After reading this book, I am surprised any of us are alive!

Jeanette says

Lots of information and its graphics and hardcover book form are marvelous. This holds so much criteria and minutia of centuries of treatments and all kinds of paths to attempt cures or remedies. Not all were conducted in a malevolent or tricking to profit mode. Most were serious attempts to improve a dire health problem, disease, or some living condition that handicapped to strong degrees. Because so many of the original patient conditions are serious ones, these were often experimental attempts or ones which supported a theory of human physical reality. So if humors or bile or excess was the problem then leeches or bloodletting or some such avenue would most probably "work" for an improvement.

It is fully a 4.5 star for the information and sources. And especially for some of the original words and graphics of portrait or cases that do equal a thousand words. In the latter chapters the "tone" seemed to me to get progressively worse, although the information was excellent. The types of joking asides and word plays entwined in the copy of the telling for these realities was so off. The humor was just sick in spots. Which for me, took the enjoyment of the reading to learn about electronic or radioactive or other cures- it took it way, way down. This is 3.5 star but I just can't round it up because of the tone.

Why would they have gone this route with the silly and such sophomoric comments? I doubt if one out of 10 people who read this book appreciated it as funny. What a misfit for the subject matter. Comparable to doing a serious ritual or funeral service in slapstick. It took away from the entire work tremendously.

We often forget that some of the most terrible quackery schemes were done in the last two centuries in spa forms of "cures". The NW USA had several such spas. There are good books out on these and especially upon the colon flushing and starvation cures.

But what is so horrific, IMHO, is how many men and women died to improve an appearance feature. Cosmetics and other cures for lack of some sex appeal improvement being so deadly.

Jenna says

The next time I hear someone say they'd like to go back to the "Good ol' days" or some such nonsense, I'm going to suggest they read this book. Sure, times were simpler back when everyone but the royalty worked from dawn to dusk, when public executions were a weekly event, when women were kept in their place, and starving children had hands chopped off for stealing a loaf of bread. Yes, those days were much simpler and it's a wonder we don't all wish to go back to them. However, one thing that should make us take pause and reconsider this yearning for times gone by is the "health care" back in those earlier times!

In *Quackery: A Brief History of the Worst Ways to Cure Everything* Lydia Kang delves into some of history's craziest and most harmful ways to "cure" people. From mercury to arsenic, radium to lobotomy, electric baths and burning, we learn about it all! Bloodletting and cannibalism and pelvic massages (ooh la la!) -- how could I possibly think that those days weren't better times to live --and die!-- in?

This book is both interesting and fun, the author blending historical facts with wit and sarcasm. If you enjoy medical history, witty books, and/or are one of those who romanticize the good ol' days, I recommend this book to you.

Diane S ? says

3.5 Regardless of the less than ideal state of the world today, this is one of those books that at least medically, make one grateful that we were born in today's medical world. This book is incredibly comprehensive and we'll researched. I know most of us have heard of the use of leeches, cold water cures, opium, electro shock therapy and the use of these have made us shudder with the knowledge we have now.

Some of the things in this book I had never heard before. Such as the use of skulls and brain parts of the dead to cure epilepsy, and mummy infused poultices to cure many different ailments. Mercury infusions for syphilis, oil from human fat for pain and also as a cancer treatment. There is so much in this book, even past sex toys and animal derived cures. Nasty, nasty! The background of these things, how they came to be, how they were packaged and sold is part of this thorough book. One thing though that bothered me when it seemed to be overdone is the authors pithy comments, which in the beginning seemed amusing, but began to wear.

How did people survive some of these things? Well of course many didn't, but those that did were amazingly lucky or smart enough to stop taking these things when they seemed to be doing more harm. Probably like many of us did in the world before safe playground equipment, seatbelts and bike helmets.

ARC from Netgalley.

? percy ✂ says

THIS IS THE MOST ME BOOK EVER AND I NEED IT

Evelina | AvalinahsBooks says

Most of us dread a trip to the doctor's office. I know I do! But have you ever thought how nice it actually is to go to one and, well, *not* have to fear heavy metal poisoning? Or... not have to lose a pint of blood to purge you?

Yeah, when I think about it, it's definitely good that the 21st century is the way it is, even if our medical systems are not perfect (*I hear you.*) But medicine hasn't always been like it is today. ***And this book will tell you how it was before it was like it is today.***

I love receiving ARCs, but the saddest bit about having this one was that it was electronic, and I longed for nothing more than to actually have a beautiful print copy on my coffee table, to be able to flick through it and read up on the hilarious/ scary/ icky medicinal history whenever I wanted to. This is just one of those books you don't read in one sitting – it's one of the books you find on your grandpa's shelf when you're visiting, when you're little, ***and you peer into the world it tells you about little bit little, bit by bit, because you're too afraid to peek for too long, but too curious to let it go, and too worried you'll run out of the book if you read it properly.***

Quackery is organized like one of those trivia books – it doesn't follow a particular storyline, but ***is focused on the different types of quackery that's been attempted to sell and successfully sold to people in the history of the known world.*** Examples follow:

- Antimony puke chalices
- Radium jockstraps
- Arsenic wallpapers
- Strychnine potency drugs
- Cocaine toothache drops for kids
- And let's not forget the famous snake oil

You'd be surprised at all of the disgusting, weird and utterly stupid things people have done throughout history to cure their ails. I am simply unable to tell you the extent of it, and I feel like I don't have to – that's what this book is for. It's creepy, it's colorful, it's got great graphics, it's got ***amazing trivia***. What's more, it's not some boring history book either! ***It's written in a very engaging and witty style, so you will never be bored.*** I do recommend it to everyone, even to the squeamish (*that's me!*) There might be a few chapters you skip because of this, but if you're as curious as I am – you will definitely enjoy it.

I thank Lydia Kang, Nate Pedersen and Workman Publishing Company for giving me a free copy of this book in exchange to my honest opinion.

Read Post On My Blog | My Bookstagram | Bookish Twitter

Alice, as in Wonderland says

I feel like I gotta give this 5 stars on account of it being 100% what I expected, which is essentially a book length Cracked article in the shape of a book.

It's gross, horrifying, and great.

Oreoandlucy says

A more complete review is available on my blog:

<https://reviewsofbooksonmynightstand...>

Not all quacks are snake oil salesmen. Of course, some of them are and in Quackery you will learn about them. Some quacks are not out to make a quick buck but legitimately believe in their own ineffective or harmful treatments. Lydia Kang, a physician, and Nate Pedersen, a journalist, will fascinate you with stories of how doctors used to use substances like cocaine, opium and tobacco to cure disease and did not recognize the dangers associated with them. Tapeworms were used as a diet aid and people thought radiation would cure just about anything that ails.

Thank you to Workman Publishing for an advanced copy of this book in order to write an honest review. All opinions are my own.

Michelle says

Quackery follows a similar format as recent releases such as Get Well Soon or Wicked Bugs. Informative, witty, and irreverent, books like these have become a new way of learning. In Quackery, Lydia Kang and Nate Pedersen present all things medical from throughout the ages. Unfortunately, they fail at the witty and irreverent aspects of presenting information in this way, making for an uneven, somewhat uncomfortable read at times as they force their modern-day knowledge onto historical actions.

The information itself is as fascinating as it is horrifying to modern ears. Organized by type of medicine like elements, plants and soils, tools, animals, and mysterious powers, each section highlights the most popular historical methods of healing the sick. The authors present the justifications for use of each item, the item's uses, and the item's eventual downfall. They present a lot of information, and while some of it may be redundant for fans of medical history, the authors' purpose to enlighten never wavers.

The problem with Quackery is that it tries too hard. The sarcastic asides and personal interjection of opinion that works so well for Sarah Vowell does not work for Ms. Kang and Mr. Pedersen. Their asides are just not funny. Their almost constant interruption of the narrative to insert their modern-day opinions is annoying rather than amusing. The biting wit that made similar books so entertaining is missing. One might even argue that such commentary is not appropriate. After all, while the so-called medicines might make us cringe today, they were used by people who honestly thought they were helpful. It makes me feel similar to watching someone mock the handicapped for acting a certain way even though they might not have control over their physical actions. There is no sympathy that our ancestors felt that blood-letting was a legitimate way to reduce a fever or that mercury soothed a child's colic. Instead, they use modern medical knowledge to laugh and make fun of the past.

The other area of concern is that while the book is titled Quackery, there is not much focus on quackery itself. Rather, the authors have adopted the idea that all historical medicine is quackery because all historical medicine used harmful things to heal. In each chapter, there is brief mention of specific instances of quackery, like the snake oil salesman, but it is but a fraction of the total chapter and often explained in such a

way that makes you realize there were legitimate reasons for selling such things. What is missing then is the real quackery – those doctors who used sugar pills for cures or those peddlers who sold sugar water as hair tonics.

Quackery taken as a history of medicinal practices is interesting. Ms. Kang and Mr. Pedersen take care to explain each item's usage as well as the reasoning behind it. They add to this information with anecdotes, stories of patients, and pictures from medical textbooks or advertisements. Had they left things there, the book would be much stronger for it. Instead, the authors spend too much time adding their opinionated commentary, leaving readers with a bad impression. This is such a shame because there is so much to be learned about how people used to practice medicine and attempted to heal the sick and the reasons for choosing the tools they did. Sadly, I am now stuck wondering just what we are using now in medicine that will end up being something for which the authors would mock us fifty years from today.

Steve says

Very educational, very entertaining, and quite eye-opening in a "they can't have seriously thought that would work, could they" kind of way.

Recommended simply for the great writing!

Barb says

While reading this book, I had to keep reminding myself that the practices and methods discussed weren't just a product of the authors' imaginations but were actual "treatments" once thought to cure problems ranging from babies who wouldn't stop crying to parasitic infections. Opium to treat vision problems? Strychnine as an aphrodisiac? Mercury to soothe babies' teething pain? "Man grease" to cure gout? They're all here ... and a lot more that will leave most readers shaking their heads.

Thank you to NetGalley and the publisher for the opportunity to read and review this book.

OutlawPoet says

Cocaine, Beaver Testicles, and the Healing Power of Man Grease

Quackery, by Lydia Kang and Nate Pedersen, is a delightfully gruesome compendium of some of the worst medical techniques and beliefs in human history. Whether it's the horrors of old surgical techniques or the best ways to eat a Ginger (not eat ginger... I mean eat 'a Ginger') for your optimum health, you'll find it in this book.

The book is funny, informative, and fascinatingly grotesque. And it's a wonder the human race survived our doctors!

Learn the surprising history of heroin, a shockingly modern use for strychnine (I had no idea people do that!), and delve into the glory of enemas – did you know they even make good wedding presents?

The book also contains wonderful photos and illustrations that manage to be both nostalgic and slightly horrifying all at once.

A wonderfully dark and informative book!

*ARC Provided via Net Galley

Julie says

Quackery: A Brief History of the Worst Ways to Cure Everything by Lydia King is a 2017 Workman Publishing Company publication.

A jaw dropping collection of gruesome and ghastly concoctions and procedures guaranteed to cure whatever ails you... if it doesn't kill you first.

Before there was an FDA to weed out potentially dangerous 'snake oil cures', the market was open to all manner of experimental potions and concoctions sold to an unsuspecting public.

This is a fascinating look at some of the most horrifying cases where strychnine and arsenic found its way into tonics designed to cure specific ailments or used for beauty treatments.

As the title suggests this is a very brief history of incredible cure-alls, medical treatments and procedures- It is not a comprehensive tome, full of dry material. Instead, it hits upon the most outrageous instances in history and as such, it makes for an informative and interesting read and is a book that you may want to keep around for reference.

It is unbelievable and shocking at times, and could make some readers a little uncomfortable. While some of these methods may have been well intentioned, none of these so -called cures were proven, studied, analyzed or deemed safe for human use, especially in such large doses or frequency.

But, even when proof surfaced of the danger some of these chemicals posed, cover-ups were not unheard of- such as with the tobacco industry, which cleverly employed doctors to advertise their products.

The chapter on tobacco was particularly interesting on several levels, as was the chapter on cocaine.

But, the second half of the book was dedicated to procedures such as performing a lobotomy, bloodletting, leeches, and the tools! - Which was akin to using torture devices.

Thank goodness, the author chose to use humor as a way of off- setting the more cringe worthy areas of the book.

In fact, I found myself chuckling a few times at the author's dry wit and jokes, which took gallows humor to a whole new level. But, maybe I just have a warped sense of humor.

Even though we do have agencies that test products for long term side effects and safety, and one could go on a long diatribe about the frustrations the FDA can cause when erring on the side of caution, slowing down the process for potentially life- saving drugs, or, on occasion they miss potential dangers, or allow carefully worded descriptions on food labels that are very misleading, there are still many products lining shelves today that promise quick weight loss, miracle cures, and don't even get me started on the claims many

beauty aids try to sell you. Although they are normally safe to use, they hardly produce the dramatic results as advertised.

When you see a disclaimer on a bottle of vitamins declaring it is not backed by the FDA, you may want to do a little research. Many of these over the counter pills, herbs, and tonics could interact with medication, or they just don't work- period. I've used these natural herbs, many times, with various degrees of success, but I do urge caution.

My point, is that charlatans, swindlers and con artists are still as plentiful as they were back centuries ago, often catering to and taking advantage of people who are desperate, looking for a quick beauty or weight loss fix. So, despite our many advances some things never change.

However, I for one, am glad it is a bit harder to poison people with Arsenic, Antimony, or Strychnine. I am also happy we know the dangers of tobacco use and that cocaine is addictive, and surgeons wash their hands and wear surgical gloves, and that their tools are sanitized- so there is that.

Overall, this is a fascinating look back at practices, rituals, and chemicals we once thought were okay to use, but as it turns out- not so much. It also makes me appreciate how far we've come medicinally, and thankful we don't use bugs, snakes, or animals based medicine- (or use them for testing), or depend upon the touch of a King to cure us.

This is a quick read, replete with photographs and drawings, and sketches. This book will appeal to history buffs, science and medicine enthusiasts, or anyone who likes to read educational material, or trivia.

The book is well organized and utterly fascinating!

Bernard O'Leary says

Quackery keeps trying to hold the reader's attention by making lame dad jokes about the subject matter. I'm not sure if the chapter on enemas includes a line like "talk about a pain in the butt!" but that's basically the level of joke we're talking about here.

It doesn't actually need to do this, because it's a fascinating and well-researched journey through the batshit history of medicine. In fact, there's an argument to be made that the medicine we know (antibiotics, sterilisation, vaccines, what have you) is the true alternative medicine, because 99% of medical innovations over history have been crazy, fraudulent, unscientific and quite likely to kill or maim the patient.

Almost everything that the human race has ever discovered, from strychnine to electricity, has at some point been swallowed or shoved up people's bums in an attempt to cure common ailments. History has been shaped by leaders who were out of their minds with mercury poisoning, or suffering the ill-effects of the whatever panacea was popular at the time. Kang rattles through them all at a breakneck pace simply because there are so many daft ideas to explore, and you're left wondering how the human race didn't simply kill itself over time, like a toddler with a bottle of bleach.

My personal favourite story is from the chapter about anthropophagic medicine (i.e. cannibalism). Kang tells it like this:

"Then there was the possibility of candied humans. The legend of "honeyed man," or mellified man, comes from the text of a 16th century Chinese pharmacologist named Li Shizhen. He wrote of a rumor that there was an Arabian practice of mummifying a human with honey. Apparently the body had to come voluntarily from an elderly person. Without the self-sacrifice, the medicine would be useless. The volunteer would eat nothing but honey for days and days, until their excrement became honey, their sweat became honey, and they urinated honey (totally not possible, but hey, it's a legend). And then after dying (as one would eventually), the body would be entombed in a coffin filled with honey. The sticky substance is actually a fantastic anti-bacterial and preservative, and has been used for medicinal purposes in cultures for ages. So perhaps combining both corpse and honey made some sort of morbid confectionary sense. After exactly 100 years, the embalmed body would then be consumed, piece by sweet piece. Who wouldn't want a piece of candied man? Actually, don't answer that."

It's such a great story but — and perhaps this is just my personal taste — I think it'd be even better if told without the jokey, matey banter. Still, a fun book.

Samantha says

For lovers of the unusual side of medical history, this book features shocking true stories and well placed (if not disturbingly funny) puns and jokes.
