

Tekst 6

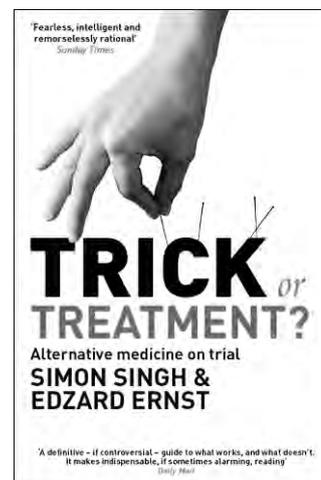
Books and computing

Alternative Medicine

NON-FICTION

TRICK OR TREATMENT?

Simon Singh and Edzard Ernst (Bantam Press, £16.99)



- 1 This engaging book, written by two eminent scientists, is about the contest between science and opinion over alternative medicine, which is on the increase in this country and is big business. It is the fastest-growing area of medical spending, but is it any good?
- 2 Acupuncture, homeopathy, and herbal medicine each get their own chapter, with an explanation of the treatment, followed by the evidence for its success. Their stark conclusion is that acupuncture does not work for a whole range of conditions, except as a placebo. Some studies say it may be effective for some types of pain and nausea, but there are other equally high-quality trials that contradict this. The authors assert that hundreds of trials have failed to deliver convincing evidence to support the use of homeopathy for the treatment of any ailment, so people who pay for homeopathic treatments are at best only receiving an elaborate placebo. Then they look at herbal medicine. They list the ones that work and those that don't, with cautionary information about some that are downright dangerous.
- 3 Finally, a valuable appendix gives a one-page resumé of each of more than 30 less common treatments, including ear candles, where thin tubes of wax are put in the ear and ignited, apparently to remove toxins from the body.
- 4 This book is a must-read for all those who use alternative medicine (and that's about 50 per cent of us in this country), or indeed anyone who just wants to find out more about a topic.

Phil Bloomfield

Oxford Times, 2008

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- “This engaging book” (first line)
- 1p 16 What goal did the authors Singh and Ernst have in writing this book?
They wanted to
- A defend the growing amount of money that is spent on alternative medicine.
 - B establish themselves as qualified practitioners of alternative medicine.
 - C give a well-documented survey on the effectiveness of alternative medicine.
 - D make clear that alternative medicine is often a sensible choice.
- 1p 17 What is Phil Bloomfield’s opinion on this book?
The writer thinks the book is
- A biased but well-written.
 - B exciting and fascinating.
 - C incomplete and superficial.
 - D interesting and informative.