



The Truth About the Drug Companies: How They Deceive Us and What to Do About It

Marcia Angell

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During her two decades at *The New England Journal of Medicine*, Dr. Marcia Angell had a front-row seat on the appalling spectacle of the pharmaceutical industry. She watched drug companies stray from their original mission of discovering and manufacturing useful drugs and instead become vast marketing machines with unprecedented control over their own fortunes. She saw them gain nearly limitless influence over medical research, education, and how doctors do their jobs. She sympathized as the American public, particularly the elderly, struggled and increasingly failed to meet spiraling prescription drug prices. Now, in this bold, hard-hitting new book, Dr. Angell exposes the shocking truth of what the pharmaceutical industry has become—and argues for essential, long-overdue change.

Currently Americans spend a staggering \$200 billion each year on prescription drugs. As Dr. Angell powerfully demonstrates, claims that high drug prices are necessary to fund research and development are unfounded: The truth is that drug companies funnel the bulk of their resources into the marketing of products of dubious benefit. Meanwhile, as profits soar, the companies brazenly use their wealth and power to push their agenda through Congress, the FDA, and academic medical centers.

Zeroing in on hugely successful drugs like AZT (the first drug to treat HIV/AIDS), Taxol (the best-selling cancer drug in history), and the blockbuster allergy drug Claritin, Dr. Angell demonstrates exactly how new products are brought to market. Drug companies, she shows, routinely rely on publicly funded institutions for their basic research; they rig clinical trials to make their products look better than they are; and they use their legions of lawyers to stretch out government-granted exclusive marketing rights for years. They also flood the market with copycat drugs that cost a lot more than the drugs they mimic but are no more effective.

The American pharmaceutical industry needs to be saved, mainly from itself, and Dr. Angell proposes a program of vital reforms, which includes restoring impartiality to clinical research and severing the ties between drug companies and medical education. Written with fierce passion and substantiated with in-depth research, *The Truth About the Drug Companies* is a searing indictment of an industry that has spun out of control.

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