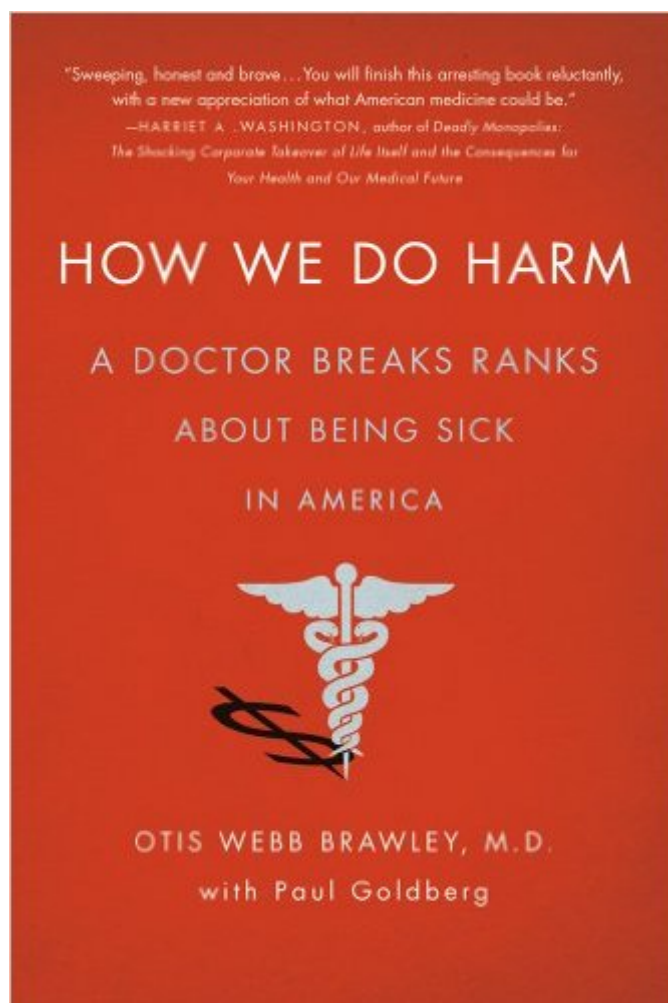


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How We Do Harm: A Doctor Breaks Ranks About Being Sick In America



Synopsis

How We Do Harm exposes the underbelly of healthcare today—the overtreatment of the rich, the under treatment of the poor, the financial conflicts of interest that determine the care that physicians' provide, insurance companies that don't demand the best (or even the least expensive) care, and pharmaceutical companies concerned with selling drugs, regardless of whether they improve health or do harm. Dr. Otis Brawley is the chief medical and scientific officer of The American Cancer Society, an oncologist with a dazzling clinical, research, and policy career. How We Do Harm pulls back the curtain on how medicine is really practiced in America. Brawley tells of doctors who select treatment based on payment they will receive, rather than on demonstrated scientific results; hospitals and pharmaceutical companies that seek out patients to treat even if they are not actually ill (but as long as their insurance will pay); a public primed to swallow the latest pill, no matter the cost; and rising healthcare costs for unnecessary—and often unproven—treatments that we all pay for. Brawley calls for rational healthcare, healthcare drawn from results-based, scientifically justifiable treatments, and not just the peddling of hot new drugs. Brawley's personal history—from a childhood in the gang-ridden streets of black Detroit, to the green hallways of Grady Memorial Hospital, the largest public hospital in the U.S., to the boardrooms of The American Cancer Society—results in a passionate view of medicine and the politics of illness in America - and a deep understanding of healthcare today. How We Do Harm is his well-reasoned manifesto for change.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I could not put this book down. I would say this is a must read for anyone that might get or who has cancer. Also anyone who has a chronic health problem should put this book in their library. I think Dr. Brawley gives compelling examples that illustrate how our health care system is broken. Read this book! This is an excellent book unless you are a quack, a greed driven doctor or drug rep. Dr. Brawley points out that we should not waste valuable tax money or even insurance money on unproven cures or on drugs that cost 10-20 times as much as a proven drug. All medical care should be research based, rational and above all "do no harm". I hate to tell you this, but we as a country cannot afford to waste massive amounts of money anymore. If we don't get serious about health care it will break the country. We cannot afford to transfer wealth to quack doctors or for procedures that don't work. A spinal fusion costs about \$80,000 yet 80% of the research says it does no good and it does a lot of harm. Is this any way to run a health care system? If you don't believe Dr. Brawley read the research for yourself. Use a little of your time to dig and see if he is telling the truth. A lot of the raw research is locked up tight and hard to access and not easy for a lay person to understand. We must rely on honest doctors like Dr. Brawley to tell us the truth about our healthcare system. The chapters on the "PSA" test for prostate cancer were shocking to say the least. All the examples about the breast cancer problems are on point.

First, a few words on Dr. Otis Brawley and my bias - he's the Chief Medical Officer for the American Cancer Society, Professor of Medicine at Emory University, and a CNN medical consultant. As for my bias, after reading his book and bio, I would trust him to give me the best medical recommendations. I wish I lived closer so he could be my physician - I'm really impressed! 'First, do no harm' is the first precept of medical ethics taught in medical school 'How We Do Harm' is Dr. Brawley's description of the real world, of how medical practice deviates from that basic ethic. The bulk of the book consists of anecdotal examples that he has become aware of. Dr. Brawley begins by comparing how much America spends on health care vs. other nations. We're now at 18% of GDP, and Switzerland is #2 - at 12%, obviously much lower. We spend 3.5X as much on health care as on food. Canadians spend half what we do, and are ranked #7 in life expectancy. We're #50. More is not better - in fact, American health care is making our nation sick, in an economic sense. Many health care providers allege that they're financially short-changed by Medicare and Medicaid; others contend that the relatively low reimbursement rates of those programs is a form of 'cost-shifting' that raises rates for others. Dr. Brawley, however, states that providers can still make money at those reduced rates treating complex cases involving uncontrolled diabetes, kidney failure, heart disease, and late-stage cancer. As for Tea Party allegations of ObamaCare medical

rationing, per 'Death Panels', Dr. Brawley says this is already happening - via insurance companies. Yet, irrational spending is still rampant.

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