

NOW AVAILABLE FREE ON OUR WEBSITE:

Halloween Science - The Truth about Ernst & Singh

William Alderson, a founding trustee of H:MC21, has produced a thorough critique of Ezard Ernst's and Simon Singh's book *Trick or Treatment?*, a book which according to its authors "tell[s] you the truth about alternative medicine" and does so with "an unparalleled level of rigour, authority and independence".

When it appeared last year *Trick or Treatment?* received glowing media reviews. Bee Wilson, for example, wrote in the *Sunday Times* of 20 April 2008 that "Fearless, intelligent and remorselessly rational, the authors exemplify the same Enlightenment spirit of criticism that animated *The Lancet* in its early days. One by one, they go through the most influential alternative therapies (acupuncture, homeopathy, chiropractic and herbal medicines) and subject them to scientific scrutiny. In each case, they ask what is the evidence base for saying that a given therapy "works"? Acupuncture, homeopathy and chiropractic all come out badly. Singh and Ernst build a compelling case that these therapies are at worst positively dangerous - chiropractic neck manipulation can result in injury or death - and at best, are more or less useless."

William Alderson has analysed Ernst and Singh's arguments and evidence for accuracy, consistency and reliability; he found nineteen major faults in their approach and concludes that *Trick or Treatment?* has "no validity as a scientific examination of alternative medicine", and that "... Ernst and Singh reveal a profound ignorance of their subject and a serious bias against alternative medicine. This bias is also seen in their choice of language, use of hyperbole and juxtaposition, and selection of sources for quotation. These allegations against two "trained scientists" (p. 3) may seem extraordinary, but it is not our opinion we are presenting, but the opinions of Edzard Ernst and Simon Singh themselves. The attacks on their primary arguments are not made by contrasting their statements with those of other people, but by contrasting them with their own (often contradictory) statements".

This [link](#) will take you to the relevant page on our website, from where you can download an abstract, a summary version or the whole document for free. Donations welcome!

Feel free to send your comments about Halloween Science to info@hmc21.org . Please note that we may not respond to emails from people who do not provide a full name and postal address. We welcome debate and discussion, but it has to be open and genuine.

More news from us later this month.