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Health & Fitness

More Harm Than Good: What Your Doctor May Not Tell You About Common Treatments and Procedures

Alan Zelicoff
Michael Bellomo
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Doctors can't be trusted! That is the theme of two new books. In *More Harm Than Good: What Your Doctor May Not Tell You About Common Treatments and Procedures* (AMACOM. 978-0-8144-0027-2), Alan Zelicoff, a physician, and Michael Bellomo, the author of *The Stem Cell Divide*, discuss the variation that exists in the treatment of common conditions and the fact that rising costs and new technology have not resulted in a greater level of healthcare.

In some cases, the authors write, HMOs, despite their bad reputation, actually help their patients more than doctors. At least one large HMO requires that their heart attack patients be treated with beta blockers, an inexpensive medication that has been proven to work better than both older diuretics and new, expensive calcium channel blockers. It is often good to have options, the authors acknowledge, but "it is hard to ignore the possibility that the lure of higher financial reward drives some of physicians' decision-making."

The book also discusses diabetes, autoimmune diseases, and the body's "expiration date"—the point when cells stop reproducing and health care be-comes more expensive, with fewer rewards. The authors wrap up with a chapter titled "Making the Best Medical Decisions for You" which discusses what can be done to reverse the situa-tion and "do more good than harm." *More Harm Than Good* is important to the national dialogue and to understanding our ailing system.