

C.S. Lewis & Co. Publicists

Editor/Producer:

What do lullabies, shamans, teddy bears, religious faith, and empathy from a doctor all have in common? They can be powerful forces in healing medical ailments.

The science behind this claim—and the critical need to delve deeper into the subject—is the focus of **DR. RICHARD KRADIN**'s enlightening new book, *The Placebo Response and the Power of Unconscious Healing* (Routledge, 2008). A nationally esteemed researcher, physician, and Harvard Medical School professor, Dr. Kradin has written the first comprehensive book on the placebo response—or why many people respond to supposedly inert interventions at a rate equal to or sometimes exceeding accepted medical treatments.

Until the medical establishment takes a serious look at placebo responses, Dr. Kradin believes we will never have a real understanding of medical therapeutics or how to treat diseases most effectively.

In academic and medical circles, the subject is surprisingly controversial. Many physicians are unwilling to face the limits of what medicine really has to offer or acknowledge how much of what *does* benefit patients may be the result of placebos. As for pharmaceutical companies, if they could invent a drug that eliminated the placebo response forever, they would spare no expense to do so.

Dr. Kradin has taken a monumental step in starting the dialog in an even-handed manner, examining what is known and what still needs to be studied about the placebo response. As a practicing physician with training in internal medicine, immunology, pathology, and psychoanalysis, Dr. Kradin brings a unique blend of expertise to his subject, peering at it through the lenses of medical history, mythology, psychology, philosophy, ethics, cognitive science, neurobiology, immunology, and more.

Please let me know if you would like me to set up an interview with Dr. Kradin. For now, thanks for your time and consideration.

Warm Regards,

Cathy Lewis

Sugar Pills, Sham Surgery, and Bear Hugs

New book offers the first serious look at the role of placebos in medicine.

Are placebos nothing more than harmless interventions to placate medical complaints? Are favorable responses to placebos just an imaginary improvement in the minds of doctors and patients? Are they simply a variable administered to help judge the efficacy of “real” medical treatments? Or, do placebos represent a complex mind-body response that triggers an innate healing ability?

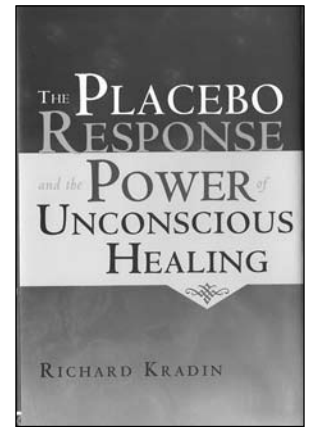
If you were to poll both medical practitioners and the general population, you would likely hear all of the above perspectives. A new book by physician and researcher Richard Kradin, MD, *The Placebo Response and the Power of Unconscious Healing* (Routledge, 2008), tackles the subject in depth, in prose designed for laypeople.

The book is chock-full of fascinating accounts of patients who healed or improved not as a result of medication or surgery, but because of the placebo response. With a scientist’s eye for accuracy and open-mindedness, Dr. Kradin covers everything from the history of placebos and the medical establishment’s relationship to them, to the psychology, chemistry, neurobiology, and even mysticism behind the placebo response.

Readers learn:

- How our earliest childhood experiences may influence our relationship to illness and healing later in life
- Why focused positive thinking, self-help strategies, and visualizing may actually hinder the placebo response
- How medicine is what “primes the pump” for the body to heal itself
- Why doctors and researchers are biased against placebo responses, despite their proven effectiveness
- How a pill’s size, color, brand, and frequency of administration can all influence patients’ responses to it
- The role of placebo responses in alternative medicine

As doctors and researchers learn more about the mind-body’s ability to heal itself by means of the placebo response, it might be possible to introduce both behavioral and pharmacological treatments that promote this response—and with it patients’ well-being. This book is a must-read for anyone interested in how the healing process happens—and how we might learn to improve it.



“There may be no more urgent problem in medicine than establishing how placebo effects are generated. Once this is known, the potential benefits are staggering.”
—Dr. Richard Kradin

For more information, contact:
CATHY S. LEWIS
CLEWIS1333@AOL.COM
voice: (845) 679-2188
WEB: CSLEWISPUBLICITY.COM

About the Author

RICHARD KRADIN, MD, is a physician, researcher, professor, national speaker, and author of *The Placebo Response and the Power of Unconscious Healing* (Routledge, 2008).

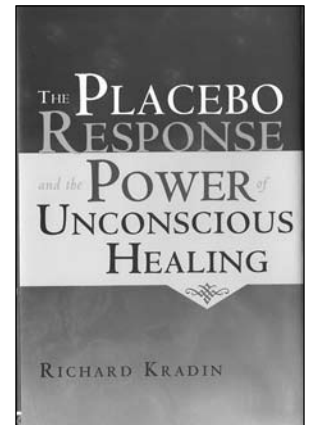
Dr. Kradin practices medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital and is an associate professor at Harvard Medical School. He is trained in internal medicine, pathology, immunology, and psychoanalysis, and has researched and lectured on such varied subjects as pulmonary pathology, thoracic oncology, advanced heart and lung disease, mind/body medicine, chronic fatigue syndrome, psychoimmunology, and the mechanisms of placebo response.

He is one of the country's foremost experts in mind-body medicine, having served as research director of the Mind/Body Medical Institute at Beth-Israel Deaconess Medical Center, and as co-director of the Harvard Medical School post-graduate study on Mind/Body Science.

Although he has contributed to more than 150 articles and texts on a broad range of medical topics, it was the placebo response that really excited his inquisitive nature during a research project. It was then Dr. Kradin realized how little he and his colleagues understood about placebos and their effects, despite the fact that many physicians have acknowledged their critical role in therapeutics. The more interested he became, the more he recognized the dearth of knowledge and the vast potential of this remarkable phenomenon.

Dr. Kradin's broad medical training and multidisciplinary interests have enabled him to appreciate the complexities and nuances of medicine and disease, and he was able to bring this crucial training to the study of placebos. This endeavor, Dr. Kradin explains, has required "a reexamination of virtually everything I had previously taken for granted with respect to medical therapeutics."

Because he believes that understanding how placebo effects are generated is extremely important to the advance of medicine today, Dr. Kradin has undertaken not only research, but also the role of educating and inspiring colleagues to delve into the subject. *The Placebo Response and the Power of Unconscious Healing* was written expressly to rouse the consciousness of medical practitioners, as well as the general public, to give the placebo response the respect it deserves.



If virtually all ancient medical treatments were placebos, how did mankind manage to survive the prescientific era? But survive it did, providing early evidence of the efficacy of the placebo response.

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Interview Topics / Segment Ideas

Behavioral Conditioning and the Placebo Response

Learn how chemical pathways in the brain play a critical role in well-being.

Memory, or the way past events determine future behavior, provides an important key to the placebo response. In particular, Dr. Kradin says our earliest interactions physically activate different areas of the brain, affecting how we respond to illness later in life. Learn:

- Why adults who were not held as infants are unlikely to be placebo responders
- How Pavlov's dogs may offer clues to the placebo effect
- Why one man's pain is another's pleasure
- The brain-body mechanisms behind walking on hot coals and surgery without anesthesia
- How words generate feelings and their influence on placebo outcomes

Positive Thinking versus Not Thinking

Why positive thoughts may not create positive healing outcomes.

As anyone who has healed from an illness knows, healing is automatic. It requires neither volition nor effort. Nonetheless, the self-help movement has increased interest in the idea that a particular mindset can promote or detract from healing. Dr. Kradin examines some of the studies. Find out:

- What happens when patients are enthusiastically involved in their treatment versus those who are nonchalant
- How patients who embrace guided imagery fare compared to those who pay no attention at all
- How expectations influence healing
- The underlying importance of getting a medical diagnosis
- Pros and cons regarding a patient's right to know side-effects, risk of poor outcomes, and other negative truths

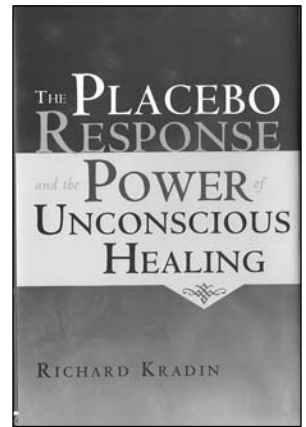
What a Difference a Doc Makes

Learn why one well-trained doctor may heal better than another.

Many doctors don't fully understand how their prescriptions actually work. Dr. Kradin says that doctors' abilities to behave confidently and empathically, however, may matter more. He discusses:

- New findings on the role of the caregiver in healing
- Why your doctor's attitude toward treatment may be more important than your own
- How medical specialization hinders the placebo response
- The real reason patients need pampering

—MORE—



If psychotherapy is nothing more than a mode of maximizing the placebo response, then it should be applauded rather than condemned for exploiting a useful therapeutic process that is underutilized in health care.

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The Nocebo Response

Learn about negative placebo responses, from voodoo death to drug delivery.

Most discussions about placebos focus on their salutary effects. But negative responses are also common. Dr. Kradin discusses:

- How fear of being cursed can be fatal
- How the inserts in drug packages can elicit negative outcomes
- The “No Pain, No Gain” factor, or how mode of delivery impacts treatment
- Self-fulfilling prophecy—the influence of expectations on drug reactions
- When prayer by others can hinder healing
- Why despite offers of help, some people are “help-rejecting complainers”

Why the Pharmaceutical Industry Hates Placebos

Researcher says Big Pharma would love to kill the sugar pill.

The pharmaceutical industry invests many millions of dollars in the development of new drugs. Few factors can potentially interfere more with a drug’s ultimate approval than a high rate of competing placebo effects in the evaluative clinical trials. Dr. Kradin says this fact makes Big Pharma antagonistic to placebo response research. Learn:

- How and why placebos are used in clinical trials
- How research can verify the placebo response, and has already begun to do so
- How to conduct a highly accurate randomized controlled trial without using placebos
- Ethical and other problems of using placebos in drug trials

Magical Medicine

Learn how “superstitions” play a powerful role in healing.

Modern medicine parallels shamanic healing, amulets and incantations, deep faith, and other ancient practices by reworking the core beliefs that disease is caused by “a loss of soul” or “the uninvited possession by demonic forces.” But, as Dr. Kradin explains, there are fundamental differences. Discover:

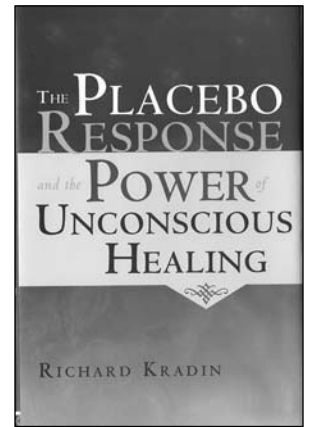
- The two key healing elements—compassion and empathy—that distinguish shamanism from allopathic medicine
- How the placebo response may explain, in part, the healing power of Jesus
- Why religion and medicine parted ways
- How the Hippocratic approach to medicine changed the patient/healer dynamic
- The similarities between faith in magical healing and belief in the power of rational medicine

6 Factors that Can Trigger the Nocebo Effect

1. Patient doubt, in a clinical trial, that she’s getting the “real” drug
2. Reading the side effects on a drug label
3. Low expectations for healing outcome
4. Painless treatment or treatment that was too easy
5. Size or color of the pill
6. Generic version of a drug instead of brand name version

Suggested Interview Questions

1. What are placebo responses? Give some examples.
2. How do well-known medications and surgeries promote placebo responses?
3. How are doctors or caregivers themselves a placebo?
4. If simply treating a patient initiates a placebo effect, how can we ever really discover the true nature of the placebo response?
5. What is the connection between the dominant Western world religions and the placebo response?
6. Why do some people respond to placebos and not others?
7. What is a nocebo response?
8. Why do some people do worse during surgery when informed they are being prayed for?
9. What is the importance of the caregiver in determining placebo response?
10. How have the analytic approach to medicine and the continued search for “a deeper cause” impeded medical progress?
11. What is your opinion of unproven herbal treatments, say, or other alternative therapies, such as energy medicine? How do they differ from the placebo response?
12. You claim that modern medicine parallels shamanic healing on some levels, but there is a key element missing—the shaman. Explain what you mean.
13. Why are placebos so successful when compared to test drugs in so many studies?
14. How do studies comparing trial drugs and placebos fall short?
15. Why do placebos appear to be ineffective for some conditions, such as ADHD, but effective for others, such as Parkinson’s?
16. How can one distinguish a placebo response from the natural tendency for symptoms to come and go, especially in chronic disorders?
17. Why isn’t there more interest by medical researchers in why placebo effects occur?
18. What are the ethical controversies surrounding the placebo response?
19. What is “placebo envy,” and why do doctors have it?
20. How might pharmaceutical companies profit from research into the placebo response?



Nocebo responses, or negative responses to inert interventions, represent a major problem for both medical management and health-care costs. Drug-related adverse events—such as treatment for symptoms of drug allergies where none actually exist—account for more than \$76 billion in hospital costs and for nearly 20 million emergency visits annually.

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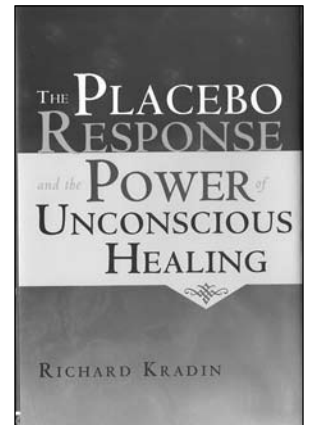
11 Ways Doctors Promote the Placebo Response

A number of studies have shown that the attitudes of caregivers may influence the likelihood of patients' developing positive placebo effects. In other words, *just going to the doctor may help you feel better and heal quicker.*

Being Empathic

Empathy is a caregiver trait that has been shown to promote spontaneous healing. Here are 11 more:

1. Interested in the whole person, including patients' attitudes and past and current social situations
2. Known to the patient over time
3. Sensitive to the patient
4. Reliable and trustworthy
5. Willing to adapt medical goals to patient needs and values
6. Encouraging of patient participation in decision making
7. Aware of how both nonverbal and verbal communication can affect patients
8. Able to optimize physical space and patient contact based on verbal cues and body language
9. Able to give ample time to each patient
10. Willing to look at all past medical history and early childhood experiences to uncover any circumstances that may impact the patient's symptoms
11. Attuned to the way volume, tone, and rhythm effect verbal communications



Even brief contact with a benevolent health care provider can promote placebo effects. This comes not by providing a specific treatment, but by allowing the patient to reexperience the feelings evoked by an early caregiver. If additional intervention is offered, either an active drug or a placebo, it may function as a surrogate—much like a baby's "blanky"—to further promote feelings of well-being.

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