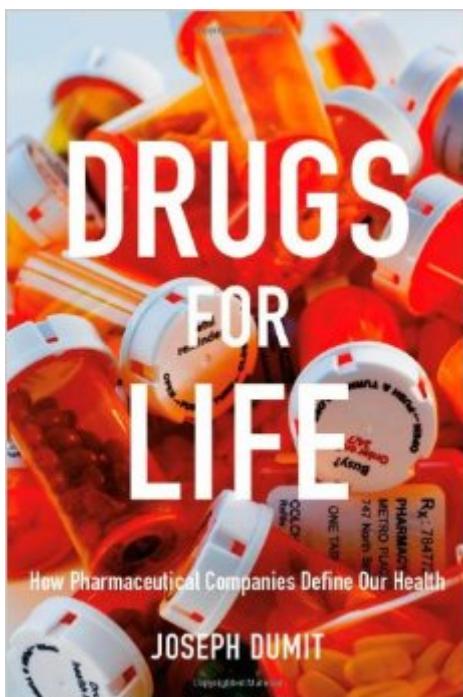


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# Drugs For Life: How Pharmaceutical Companies Define Our Health (Experimental Futures)



## Synopsis

Every year the average number of prescriptions purchased by Americans increases, as do healthcare expenditures, which are projected to reach one-fifth of the U.S. gross domestic product by 2020. In *Drugs for Life*, Joseph Dumit considers how our burgeoning consumption of medicine and cost of healthcare not only came to be, but also came to be taken for granted. For several years, Dumit attended pharmaceutical industry conferences; spoke with marketers, researchers, doctors, and patients; and surveyed the industry's literature regarding strategies to expand markets for prescription drugs. He concluded that underlying the continual growth in medications, disease categories, costs, and insecurity is a relatively new perception of ourselves as inherently ill and in need of chronic treatment. This perception is based on clinical trials that we have largely outsourced to pharmaceutical companies. Those companies in turn see clinical trials as investments and measure the value of those investments by the size of the market and profits that they will create. They only ask questions for which the answer is more medicine. *Drugs for Life* challenges our understanding of health, risks, facts, and clinical trials, the very concepts used by pharmaceutical companies to grow markets to the point where almost no one can imagine a life without prescription drugs.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Anthropologist Joe Dumit has written one of the most important and radical (going to the heart of

things) books about health, marketing, medical research, and the pharmaceutical industry in recent decades. It needs to be on the shelf of every follower of Angell, Abramson, Avorn, Greene, Cassels, Welch, Hadler, Healy, Brody, Conrad, Goldacre and all the other doctors, journalists and social scientists broadcasting wake-up calls about how our current social perspective on health has been hijacked and turned on its head. Even better than many of the others, Dumit explains how it came about that we no longer think of health as freedom from treatment, but think of health as getting treatment for asymptomatic risks that are somehow endangering our future. This new paradigm of health - permanent risk and permanent treatment - is a catastrophe, because we are, always, perpetually, at risk of dying, and therefore if research (by the ever-growing pharmaceutical industry) is directed at uncovering risks, it will always succeed and there will be no future but more life-long pill regimens, more self-diagnoses, more screens, more tests, more side effects, more false results, more expense, and much much more worry. And for what - precious little gain in longevity, symptom-free days, or genuine understanding of our minds and bodies. Seeing the obvious is the first step towards resistance and change, but we are deep in the pocket and it will be a long road out. Make your book club read this book!

Wow was the book an eye opener. I always knew that pharmaceutical companies were for profit and have their own agendas but this book really shows how these companies are changing the way we look at health today. Dumit has really done his research in a wide variety of areas to give the reader an overall view of how pharmaceutical companies are working through marketing, clinical trials, and trying to get directly to patients to get people to take more pills. The part that bothered me the most was how Dumit shows that these companies seem to never consider what would be the best treatment but base every decision on how to get the most profit. It is a scary look at our healthcare system today and the constant push by these companies for more people to take more pills for as long as they can, even when there are side effects. I will say that I am not a science person so I found reading this book to be difficult at times. I struggled with some of the concepts Dumit talked about and found myself skimming through some parts. Dumit does make his points clear though about how there has been a shift in how we look at health during the last several years. I know that the next time I go to see my doctor I am going to be discussing with her the things I learned in this book and I hope it will help me to make better decisions about my own health in the future. I highly recommend this book to everyone, it is really an important subject that effects everyone sooner or later.

In short, this is an absolutely essential book that holds relevance to not only the medical and pharmacological issues at hand but also broader questions about the commercialization of science in society. I have not encountered a better book to explain the medical predicament in which we find ourselves today. Dumit employs engaging examples and thought-provoking analysis. The text is indeed theoretically rich but could be approached by non-experts as well due to its readability.

A well written book that is a scholarly work. That says volumes for me. The book describes the culture of creating an artificial consensus about the entire structure of medicine, based on what pharmaceutical companies want to sell. Most devastating line in the book was the author's report of a pharmaceutical marketing executive stating the goal is to have everyone on at least 5 drugs for their lifetime. Thus the title: "Drugs for Life". We are not imagining that there is increasing influence on medical practice from big pharma. It's a feature, not a bug in their plans.

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