

Venue:	Doody's Book Review Service
Title:	Book Review: Alternative medicine: a critical assessment of 150 modalities, Edzard Ernst
Date:	2019
Type:	Book Review
Author(s)/ Presenter(s):	Paul Ratte
Abstract (or Book Review):	<p>Description</p> <p>This is a comprehensive critical assessment of 150 alternative medicine modalities. After a lengthy introduction by the author, the modalities are grouped in one of five categories: diagnostic techniques, medicines and oral treatments, physical therapies, other therapies, and umbrella terms. Each modality is assessed using five criteria: plausibility, efficacy, safety, cost, risk/benefit balance. Each criterion receives one of three simple grades: positive, debatable, negative.</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>The purpose is to provide a quick overview and assessment of many popular alternative medicine therapies. The author's deliberate choice of brevity makes the book easy to read, but it is far too simplistic to offer readers a meaningful assessment.</p> <p>Audience</p> <p>The purpose is to provide a quick overview and assessment of many popular alternative medicine therapies. The author's deliberate choice of brevity makes the book easy to read, but it is far too simplistic to offer readers a meaningful assessment.</p> <p>Features</p> <p>For 150 alternative medicine modalities, the book offers a concise description and grade, with references to support the author's opinion. The author's tiresome attack and defend rhetoric could easily be remedied by having multiple authors. In addition, all modalities get equal analysis. The common modalities used by many people (chiropractic and acupuncture for example) should get more comprehensive reviews.</p> <p>Assessment</p> <p>This book appears to be biased against the use of alternative medicine. It takes an evidence-based approach rather than an evidence-informed approach. While I agree that good clinical evidence is lacking to support the use of many alternative medicine</p>

	<p>modalities, the author's disdain for clinical expertise and patient preference may indicate an underlying bias against alternative medicine. By using only the standards of conventional therapeutics to judge alternative medicine, the author's claims of "great openness to new ideas" seem unfounded.</p>
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