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# Junk Medicine

Doctors, Lies and the Addiction Bureaucracy

by Theodore Dalrymple

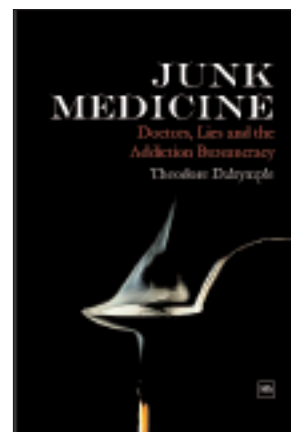
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Author Theodore Dalrymple  
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[www.harriman-house.com/junkmedicine](http://www.harriman-house.com/junkmedicine)

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## Key points

- A topical and controversial subject, always at the top of the news agenda.
- Provocative opinions expressed by a respected and high-profile commentator.
- Extract rights sold to Mail on Sunday for publication in August 2007.
- Radical views certain to draw a high level of newspaper and radio interest.

## Book description

Almost everything you know about heroin addiction is wrong.

Not only is it wrong, but it is obviously wrong. Heroin is not highly addictive; withdrawal from it is not medically serious; addicts do not become criminals to feed their habit; addicts do not need any medical assistance to stop taking heroin; and contrary to received wisdom, heroin addiction most certainly IS a moral or spiritual problem.

Based on his experience as a prison doctor and as a psychiatrist in a large general hospital in Birmingham, Dr. Dalrymple argues that addiction to heroin is not an illness at all, and that doctors only make it worse. They deceive both the addicts and themselves by pretending that they have something to offer.

In this brilliant, entertaining and provocative book, Theodore Dalrymple explains how and why a literary tradition dating back to De Quincey and Coleridge, and continuing up to the deeply sociopathic William Burroughs and beyond, has misled all Western societies for generations about the nature of heroin addiction. These writers' self-dramatizing and dishonest accounts of their own addiction have been accepted uncritically, and have been more influential by far in forming public attitudes than the whole of pharmacological science. As a result, a self-serving, self-perpetuating and completely useless medical bureaucracy has been set up to deal with the problem.

With scathing wit, implacable logic and savage denunciation, Dr. Dalrymple exposes the mythology surrounding heroin addiction. Moving seamlessly between literature, pharmacology, history and philosophy, he demonstrates what happens when the nature of a social problem is so thoroughly misunderstood, and when human beings are regarded as inanimate objects rather than as agents of their own destiny. His scintillating, iconoclastic little book has an importance far beyond its immediate subject matter.

## About the author

Theodore Dalrymple is a leading commentator on health matters who formerly worked as a prison doctor and as a psychiatrist in a hospital Birmingham. He writes extensively on medical and social matters for national newspapers, The Spectator, and City Journal, and has appeared many times on BBC Radio on programmes such as The Moral Maze.

Previous titles by Dr Dalrymple include: Life at the Bottom: The Worldview That Makes the Underclass and Our Culture, What's Left of It: The Mandarins and the Masses.

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