

## Data Based Medicine Papers: Health Warning

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The market in Medicines is truly strange. Doctors are the consumers but they consume by putting pills into someone else's mouth and so they consume without side effects. The prescription-only status of medicines makes this small band of consumers the focus of the greatest concentration of marketing power on the planet. Many doctors pride themselves on spotting and resisting company adverts and free lunches, unaware that clinical trials, and independent guidelines, rather than free lunches have become industry's favored marketing tools. As a result guidance like this will shock many doctors. Clever marketing means that some will view the content as a personal attack.

All we can say is that the authors who are doctors have been making statements like these for a decade without significant objection. If there is content that is wrong we will be happy to modify it - if offered the data. If anyone can see a way to improve on what we have here we welcome input.

Most people, when we are ill, want to hand over choice and vigilance to someone we hope is going to care for us as they would their own partner, parent, child or best friend. Ideally no-one should have to cope on their own with uncertainties like the ones outlined in these papers. The hope is that the uncertainties will get doctors and patients working as a team and will ensure that the choices of both doctors and patients are not pre-determined by marketing and their collective vigilance is not suspended.

Having made this point, these papers are rather like horrific footage of starving children in Africa or earthquake victims or the consequences of some other natural disaster. This works for some people but not others. If not for you, think twice about accessing this material.