

A fan of Dr. Mendelsohn's

Slidell

Dr. Robert Mendelsohn is one reason why I take The Times-Picayune/The States-Item. He can back up what he says by periodicals, the Physician's Desk Reference and actual experiences.

He also teaches at the University of Illinois and is a qualified, respected and highly believable doctor who is out to expose physicians who indiscriminately overmedicate their patients as well as surgeons who are knife-happy and ready to hack away at the slightest pretext.

I have found his book "The Medical Heretic" and his columns most illuminating. My experience has been that today's doctor is not interested in the Hippocratic Oath but the hypocritical oath. A man with a back pain walks into a doctor's office and is immediately put in the hospital and in a few days time has more than four doctors on his

case, along with the original doctor. The lab tests and split-second bedside visits by all doctors are on the tab, mushrooming the bill into the thousands of dollars.

I have spoken to many people who take Dr. Mendelsohn very seriously and no doubt base their opinion largely upon his newspaper articles. Could it be that doctors are finding it difficult to persuade their clients that they and they alone know what is best for them? Doctors aren't hurting moneywise because the poor victim (patient) is given the shaft when it comes to preparing his bill.

Many of us would not be here today if it were not for the intervention of good doctors. Mendelsohn's columns often refer to the hazards of some medicines and the unnecessary usage of the surgeon's knife. For that I commend Dr. Mendelsohn.

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Bad advice

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How ironic that on the very day (Feb. 9) a local physician, Lawrence Zaslow, wrote to complain about Dr. Robert Mendelsohn's column (The People's Doctor), the good doctor's advice was rife with the very "alarmist and impractical comments" that Dr. Zaslow deplored. Only this time Mendelsohn strayed far afield, choosing to advise a woman who wrote questioning her daughter's special education.

Dr. Mendelsohn failed to address the specifics of the woman's concerns, using the letter as a launching pad for a bilious and uncontrolled attack on educators. Worse, several of his recommendations are unsubstantiated, at best, and potentially harmful. Glenn Doman's methods may be two decades old, but they remain unsubstantiated, as he seems scrupulous in not allowing scientific examination of his claims.

As for Ruth Harrell's supposed "scientifically controlled studies" of favorable treatment of Down's Syndrome children using nutritional supplements, the study appeared in a non-refereed publication and was riddled with methodological flaws. Several attempts at replicating her findings, using tighter controls, have failed.

The harm comes from the false hope such tendentious "findings" and advice raises in parents of special children. From personal experience, I've seen parents squander precious money and time using Doman's and Harrell's regimens. Unfortunately, these resources were often diverted from the real needs of other family members or from effective methods of treatment.

Space does not allow for additional comment on Mendelsohn's flawed advice or perspective. Suffice it to say that a responsible newspaper ought to carefully weigh the good his column does against its potential for mischief.

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