



Ending Medical Reversal

By Vinayak K. Prasad MD MPH, MD, Adam S. Cifu

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We expect medicine to progress in an orderly fashion, with good medical practices being replaced by better ones. But some tests and therapies are discontinued because they are found to be worse, or at least no better, than what they replaced. Medications like Vioxx and procedures such as vertebroplasty for back pain caused by compression fractures are among the medical "advances" that turned out to be dangerous or useless. What Dr. Vinayak K. Prasad and Dr. Adam S. Cifu call *medical reversal* happens when doctors start using a medication, procedure, or diagnostic tool without a robust evidence base—and then stop using it when it is found not to help, or even to harm, patients.

Drs. Prasad and Cifu narrate fascinating stories from every corner of medicine to explore why medical reversals occur, how they are harmful, and what can be done to avoid them. They explore the difference between medical innovations that improve care and those that only appear to be promising. They also outline a comprehensive plan to reform medical education, research funding and protocols, and the process for approving new drugs that will ensure that more of what gets done in doctors' offices and hospitals is truly effective.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Every doctor should read this book."

(JAMA Internal Medicine)

"Dr. Prasad and Dr. Cifu offer a five-step plan, including pointers for determining if a given treatment is really able to do what you want it to do, and advice on finding a like-minded doctor who won't object to a certain amount of back-seat driving. Of course, there are no guarantees that their tips will endure forever, but they probably have a longer shelf life than most medical advice."

(New York Times)

"An outstanding, genre-defining work, this book will be read by students, educators, policymakers, scientists, scholars, medical skeptics, and health-care pundits alike."

(John Henning Schumann, MD, host of Public Radio Tulsa's Medical Matters)

"An important book that frames medical reversal in a compelling way. Readers will be drawn to this clearly written account."

(David S. Jones, MD, Harvard University, author of Broken Hearts: The Tangled History of Cardiac Care)

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"Ending Medical Reversal goes far in teaching medical students and practicing physicians alike how to learn

on our own."

(*The Lancet*)

"This has to be on the reading list for medical and nursing students."

(*Nursing Times*)

About the Author

Vinayak K. Prasad, MD, MPH, is a practicing hematologist-oncologist and internal medicine physician. He is an assistant professor of medicine and public health at Oregon Health & Science University. **Adam S. Cifu, MD**, is a professor of medicine at the University of Chicago. He is a practicing general internist, medical educator, and the coauthor of *Symptom to Diagnosis: An Evidence-Based Guide*.

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