

Figure 10.2.12.
Medical quackery

Database: World Problems and Issues

Link type: aggravated by problems (loops only)

Network nodes: 58

UIA database: <http://db.uia.org/scripts/sweb.dll/uiaf?DD=PR&CL=2&DR=D1725>



Quackery is the use of primitive methods of medical treatment and healing by those who only pretend to have the necessary knowledge and qualifications to heal. Sick people may put all their hope and money into quack healing, hoping it will alleviate the diseases against which modern medicine is impotent, and those diseases which standard doctors refuse to treat. Such blind faith, usually encouraged by the quack healers, can lead to severe emotional and financial distress if the alternative methods - often viewed as the last resort - fail to produce the desired effects. Quack healers have played a significant role in medicine throughout history. In the UK and Europe, treatment was long in the hands of old wives, lay healers, priests and herbalists, many of whom were genuine and who followed old-established folk methods, but few of whom could boast any formal training. Some techniques were considerably less reputable than others, but many practitioners would continue in practice despite the obvious ineffectiveness of the methods they prescribed. Further opportunity for charlatanism arose with advances in advertising techniques, and by 1843 medical advertising is quoted as taking a large proportion of advertising space in the press. Although legislation has been introduced to protect the gullible and the desperate from some of the more extravagant and misleading claims, quack remedies are still widely advertised in the press and, increasingly, on the radio and on television.