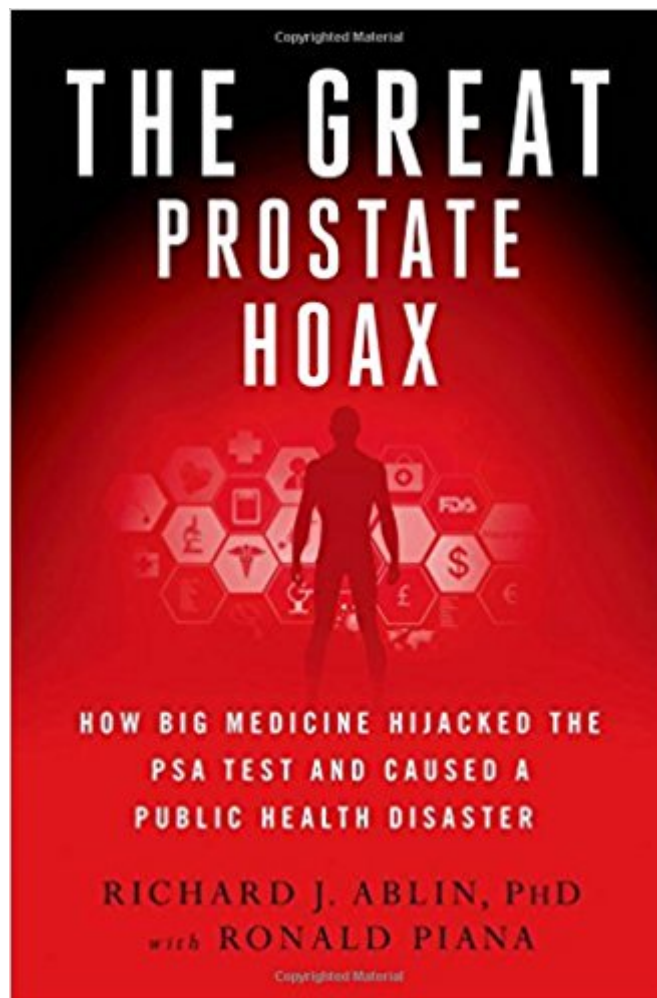




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The Great Prostate Hoax: How Big Medicine Hijacked The PSA Test And Caused A Public Health Disaster



Synopsis

Every year, more than a million men undergo painful needle biopsies for prostate cancer, and upward of 100,000 have radical prostatectomies, resulting in incontinence and impotence. But the shocking fact is that most of these men would never have died from this common form of cancer, which frequently grows so slowly that it never even leaves the prostate. How did we get to a point where so many unnecessary tests and surgeries are being done? In *The Great Prostate Hoax*, Richard J. Ablin exposes how a discovery he made in 1970, the prostate-specific antigen (PSA), was co-opted by the pharmaceutical industry into a multibillion-dollar business. He shows how his discovery of PSA was never meant to be used for screening prostate cancer, and yet nonetheless the test was patented and eventually approved by the FDA in 1994. Now, doctors and victims are beginning to speak out about the harm of the test, and beginning to search for a true prostate cancer-specific marker.

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Customer Reviews

“The Great Prostate Hoax boldly exposes the profit, politics and fraud behind PSA screening, and the serious harm done to countless men. This is a must-read for every man, and the women who care about them.”
—Margaret I. Cuomo, M.D., author of *A World Without Cancer*
“Dick Ablin, the discoverer of PSA, provides the inside story of how it became PSA, a veritable public health disaster, harming millions of men. The Hoax is a unique and provocative look into big medicine and why we desperately need a better way forward.”

Eric J. Topol, MD, Director, Scripps Translational Science Institute, Chief Academic Officer, Scripps Health and Professor of Genomics, The Scripps Research Institute; Author, *The Creative Destruction of Medicine*—“An intriguing story of how strong financial interests can trump weak data. And it goes well beyond the usual suspect—the manufacturer of the PSA test—to those who gain from more prostate cancer treatments and from cleaning up the resulting mess.”—H. Gilbert Welch MD, MPH, author of *Overdiagnosed: Making People Sick in the Pursuit of Health*—“The Great Prostate Hoax is the answer to my prayers, finally getting the message out to millions of men in jeopardy of undergoing unnecessary and debilitating treatments. Hoax sends a clear message that those who profit from PSA testing are doing so at the expense of countless men. A must read.”—Alvin Cox, prostate cancer survivor who defied a nationally renowned urologist.

Richard J. Ablin, PhD, DSc (HON) is a professor of Pathology at University of Arizona College of Medicine. In 1970 he identified PSA—the prostate specific antigen that is used as a test for prostate cancer. For decades he has fought against the misuse of his discovery, including a 2010 New York Times op-ed titled “The Great Prostate Mistake.” He lives in Tucson, AZ. Ronald Piana is a science writer specializing in oncology. He has published more than 400 bylined articles in leading medical journals.

After reading this excellent book, I now wonder three years after completing prostate cancer treatment and being cancer free with minimal side effects, if I really needed treatment. When I was diagnosed with prostate cancer my background as a psychologist with an interest in research led me to reviewing the literature on prostate cancer. I became aware of the risks of severe side effects inherent in most prostate cancer treatments and the dangers of the profit driven prostate cancer industry. I then selected the treatment I believe has the least risk of side effects, proton therapy. I discovered that most of the men going through this treatment with me also invested a great deal of time and effort reviewing this same literature. Unfortunately, most men don’t seek such knowledge and instead make the understandable mistake of trusting the physician, almost always a urologist, who diagnosed their prostate cancer and then recommends treatment. A very real danger exists when the livelihood of this physician is based on patients agreeing to the treatment he or she is recommending and then providing. Dr. Richard Ablin has clearly achieved his stated goal for writing this book of “...exposing the abuse of power and profit over patient ethos as the prostate cancer industry incorrectly uses the PSA to scare men into

treatment. Men should not automatically agree to the use of the PSA to aid in diagnosing prostate cancer. They should instead get a second opinion from their internist or medical oncologist. Men diagnosed with prostate cancer should consider watchful waiting and also do their research on the side effects of different treatments. I strongly encourage men and their loved ones to read this important book. Harold Dawley, Ph.D., author of *Proton Warriors* and *Surviving Prostate Cancer AND The Prostate Cancer Industry*.

I had a PSA test a few years ago and when results showed a high PSA. I agree to a biopsy. It was very painful and I was peeing blood for a week and blood in my semen for 2 weeks. It showed no signs of cancer. A year later my doctor did another PSA test (I didn't know they do a PSA test every year when a man reaches a certain age) and wanted to perform another biopsy. I started researching PSA tests and immediately found Dr Ablin, the respected Pathologist who discovered the Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA). He explains that it only indicated that you have a prostate (hence the term Prostate specific not cancer specific. In the chapter "the color of money" he explains how they got FDA approval and how it is a multi-billion dollar industry.

It is very sad how the medical-pharmaceutical conglomerate has absconded with the health of our society. Free will can only be exercised when the patient has "Informed Consent". This cannot be accomplished when your physician has massively inadequate knowledge in numerous areas in which they feel competent (but are not). This book, written by the scientist who discovered the PSA (prostate specific antigen molecule) exposes all that he has now learned regarding the misuse by doctors and surgeons of his discovery. Read it and learn. David Getoff, CCN, FAAIM

Albin writes a convincing book that medical industry is corrupt and greedy and the FDA, and professional associations do not adequately protect consumers - albeit with more pages and support than is necessary (and something most of us already believed). Albin says In the aggregate we would be better off if we did not do PSA testing and biopsies, surgeries, and radiation are over prescribed. While in aggregate as a society we over diagnose and treat prostate cancer it remains that individuals do have prostate cancer. Some get treated and saved. Some don't get treated and die prematurely. All this book did was put doubt in my mind, with no solution. It leaves you not to trust your urologist. It doesn't resolve the question if your doctor prescribes a biopsy based on a PSA test - what then do you do? And if the biopsy identifies cancer - what do you do? Dr. Ablin mentions in his case he will do nothing, as did his father who died from prostate cancer. Somehow I

can't believe there isn't a way to identify aggressive cancers that should be treated, even with the possible risks. And that's where this book comes short - on solutions for individuals. Also while the book discusses futility of the PSA test ad nauseum nothing is ever mentioned about FREE PSA, which my lab report tells me is a reliable indicator of cancer, especially in coordination with other risk factors such as DRE, age, and symptoms. The book makes it very clear that PSA is not something produced by a cancer so it can't be a marker, but it really doesn't discuss the correlation with the presence of cancer. If you have a high PSA score, this book provides useful background on what to expect from your medical care providers which makes it a useful read, however it really doesn't provide a clear roadmap on what to do with the conflicting advice you will get. Saying "most men die with prostate cancer, not from it", is not going to help the man who has an aggressive cancer, and still feels he has lots of life to live.

Good book to read before have a prostate test.

Almost 20 years (I'm 69 now) I was referred to a urologist since my PSA went from about 1.5 to 2. That's when I started my research with the help of a friend who completed her graduate degrees in Medical Informatics. The urologist recommended a biopsy. I suggested we wait six months and re-test which fell back to the previous reading.. After reading summaries of the most current research, some of which can be found in "The Great Prostate Hoax", "Overdiagnosed" and "The Harm We Do", I feel lucky; lucky and angry. All of that anxiety, all the rude and decidedly unprofessional communication (or lack thereof) from urologists. If you or someone you know are in a similar situation please due your do diligence. Ask, read, research.

Great insight from the man who discovered PSA!

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