Honey, Mud, Maggots, and Other Medical Marvels

The Science Behind Folk Remedies and Old Wives' Tales

February 1, 1998

Robert and Michéle Root-Bernstein
Houghton-Mifflin Company

According to this book, Mom may have been right—or at least those medieval medics were. Slathering on some sterile honey, drinking urine, getting bled, immersing oneself in water and eating dirt may sound disgusting, but so is swallowing 75 pills a day. Far from folklore, these old remedies serve as the bases for today's common treatments: Urine provides us with modern fertility and anticlotting agents, and Kaopectate is chock-full of clay.

Along with his historian wife, Michéle, Robert Root-Bernstein (best known for his *Rethinking AIDS*) tackles these ancient approaches one at a time, reviewing the potential values, dangers, clinical studies and current derivations on the pharmacy shelf.

The book presents neither arrogant dismissal nor gullible acceptance; it is simply a call for rational assessment. The Root-Bernsteins state their case: These remedies may not seem scientific, but lack of research into what many people with HIV are using to alleviate symptoms leaves us all with a very unscientific ignorance.

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