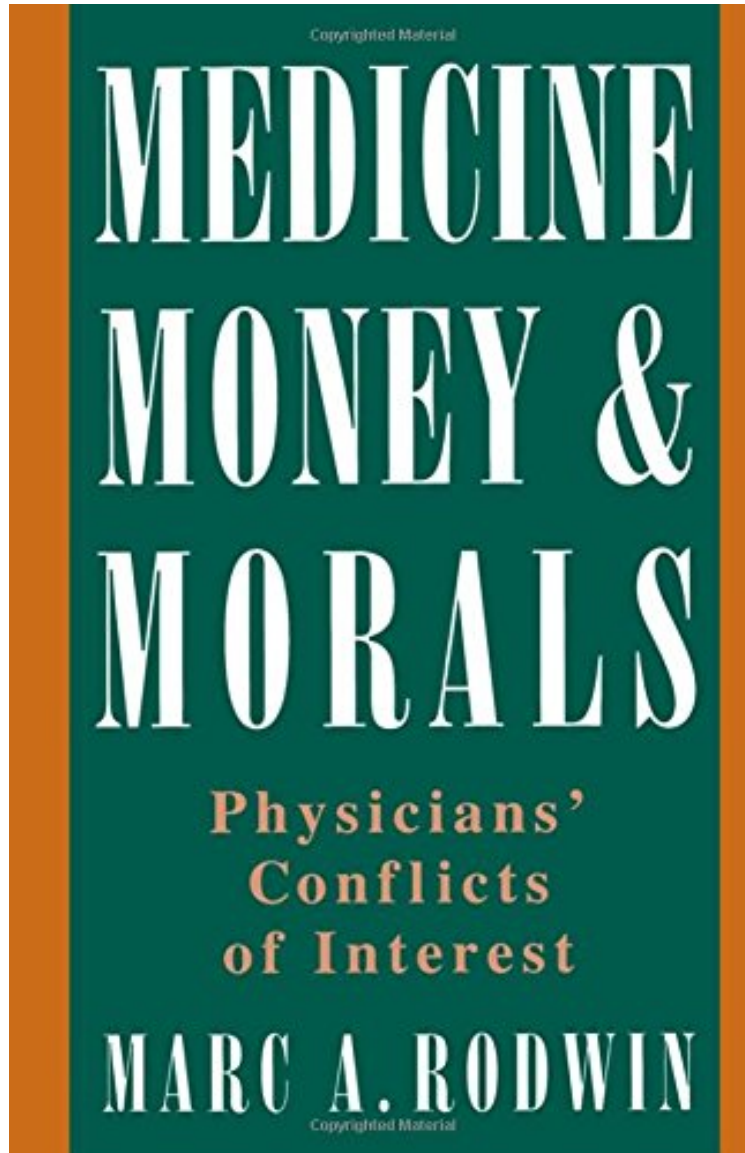


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Medicine, Money, and Morals: Physicians' Conflicts of Interest

Marc A. Rodwin

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Marc A. Rodwin : Medicine, Money, and Morals: Physicians' Conflicts of Interest before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Medicine, Money, and Morals: Physicians' Conflicts of Interest:

Marc A. Rodwin draws on his own experience as a health lawyer--and his research in health ethics, law, and policy--to reveal how financial conflicts of interest can and do negatively affect the quality of patient care. He shows that the problem has become worse over the last century and provides many actual examples of how doctors' decisions are influenced by financial considerations. We learn how two California physicians, for example, resumed referrals to Pasadena General Hospital only after the hospital started paying \$70 per patient (their referrals grew from 14 in one month to 82 in the next). As Rodwin writes, incentives such as this can inhibit a doctor from taking action when a hospital fails to provide proper service, and may also lead to the unnecessary hospitalization of patients. We also learn of a Wyeth-Ayerst Labs promotion in which physicians who started patients on INDERAL (a drug for high blood pressure, angina, and migraines) received 1000 mileage points on American Airlines for each patient (studies show that promotions such as this have a direct effect on a doctor's choice of drug). Rodwin reveals why the medical community has failed to regulate conflicts of interest: peer review has little authority, state licensing boards are usually ignorant of abuses, and the AMA code of ethics has historically been recommended rather than required. He examines what can be learned from the way society has coped with the conflicts of interest of other professionals --lawyers, government officials, and businessmen--all of which are held to higher standards of accountability than doctors. And he recommends that efforts be made to prohibit and regulate certain kinds of activity (such as kickbacks and self-referrals), to monitor and regulate conduct, and to provide penalties for improper conduct. Our failure to face physicians' conflicts of interest has distorted the way medicine is practiced, compromised the loyalty of doctors to patients, and harmed society, the integrity of the medical profession, and patients. For those concerned with the quality of health care or medical ethics, *Medicine, Money and Morals* is a provocative look into the current health care crisis and a powerful prescription for change.

From Kirkus a convincing case for resolving financial conflicts of interest that compromise the judgment of doctors and that bias the clinical choices they make. Whereas lawyers, certain financial professionals, and government officials are considered by law to be fiduciaries--i.e., obligated to work for the benefit of those they represent--there's as yet no effective policy to hold doctors accountable in this way. The medical profession has never developed a framework to address this problem, and, according to Rodwin (Law and Public Policy/Indiana University-Bloomington), it's unlikely to do so. Here, Rodwin examines seven activities that lead to significant conflicts of interest among physicians: kickbacks; referral to facilities in which physicians have a financial interest; the selling of medical products that they themselves prescribe; hospital purchases of private practices; payments by hospitals for patient referrals; gifts by pharmaceutical firms; and risk-sharing in health-maintenance organizations (HMOs). Disturbing examples of each of these activities dot the text and dramatize how patients can be adversely affected by them. Rodwin draws on the regulatory approaches of other professions to offer recommendations for solving the medical establishment's conflict-of-interest problems. He argues for setting up new institutions and rules to hold physicians to fiduciary standards, with legislatures taking the lead in laying down the ground rules, and with courts, regulatory agencies, third-party payers, and state attorneys general enforcing them. One interesting concept the author examines is the regulation of the medical industry by a federal commission, similar to the regulation of the securities business by the SEC. A constructive contribution--featuring a well-presented analysis as well as concrete proposals for reform--to the ongoing discussion of our national health-care crisis. -- Copyright copy;1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. "Excellent...The first systematic examination of financial conflicts of interest in the medical profession. Rodwin's proposals for reform deserve very serious consideration."--The New England Journal of Medicine"Medicine, Money, and Morals is about the effects of financial incentives on medical practice. It is not the first work to address these questions...but it is the best...Clearly will be of great use to those who have professional reasons to be interested...An important start to understanding the fundamental implications that financial incentives and decisions about the shape of the financing system hold for the ties that bind doctors and patients. Anyone practicing medicine or studying the health care system would benefit from its description and its analysis."--Journal of the American Medical Association"Rodwin painstakingly scrutinizes medical practice in the USA, giving a fascinating insight into the dilemmas facing patients when medical decisions can affect the doctor's economic well being, the success or otherwise of a practice, or the survival of a hospital."--The Lancet"Provides thorough, thoughtful, and practical analysis of this important problem. Rodwin canvassed not only the academic, trade, and popular literature on the subject but also comments on providers of proposed federal rules, investment prospectuses for medical joint ventures, and kickback trial records to come up with the most exhaustive catalogue available of the scope of the conflict-of-interest problem. The analyses and recommendations that follow make this book a must-read for those seeking to understand the current health care crisis."--Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law"A theoretically sophisticated, empirically detailed account of conflicts of interest and the physician's role....An impressive piece of work--broad in its scope, clear in its objectives, confident of its findings, certain of the policy implications."--The Journal of Legal MedicineFrom the Back CoverA theoretically sophisticated, empirically detailed account of conflicts of interest and the physician's role...An impressive piece of work- broad in its scope, clear in its objectives, confident

of its finding, certain of the policy implications.