



# Getting What We Deserve: Health and Medical Care in America

*Alfred Sommer*

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One of America's leading public health experts finds a host of ills in this country's health care system:

- The United States spends nearly twice as much on health care as the rest of the developed world, yet has higher infant mortality rates and shorter longevity than most nations.
- We have access to many different drugs that accomplish the same end at varying costs, and nearly all are cheaper abroad.
- Our life span had doubled over the past century before we developed effective drugs to treat most diseases or even considered altering the human genome.
- The benefits of almost all newly developed treatments are marginal, while their costs are high.

In his blunt assessment of the state of public health in America, Alfred Sommer argues that human behavior has a stronger effect on wellness than almost any other factor.

Despite exciting advances in genomic research and cutting-edge medicine, Sommer explains, most illness can be avoided or managed with simple, low-tech habits such as proper hand washing, regular exercise, a balanced diet, and not smoking. But, as he also shows, this is easier said than done.

Sommer finds that our fascination with medical advances sometimes keeps us from taking responsibility for our individual well-being. Instead of focusing on prevention, we wait for medical science to cure us once we become sick.

Humorous, sometimes acerbic, and always well informed, Sommer's thought-provoking book will change the way you look at health care in America.

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