

The New York Times Book of Medicine: More than 150 Years of Reporting on the Evolution of Medicine

By Gina Kolata

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Today we live longer, healthier lives than ever before in history—a transformation due almost entirely to tremendous advances in medicine. This change is so profound, with many major illnesses nearly wiped out, that it's hard now to imagine what the world was like in 1851, when the *New York Times* began publishing. Treatments for depression, blood pressure, heart disease, ulcers, and diabetes came later; antibiotics were nonexistent, viruses unheard of, and no one realized yet that DNA carried blueprints for life or the importance of stem cells. Edited by award-winning writer Gina Kolata, this eye-opening collection of 150 articles from the *New York Times* archive charts the developing scientific insights and breakthroughs into diagnosing and treating conditions like typhoid, tuberculosis, cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's, and AIDS, and chronicles the struggles to treat mental illness and the enormous success of vaccines. It also reveals medical mistakes, lapses in ethics, and wrong paths taken in hopes of curing disease. Every illness, every landmark has a tale, and the newspaper's top reporters tell each one with perceptiveness and skill.

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Editorial Review

Review
"From party conversation fodder to the esoteric, topics and authors appear and reappear all in the articulate, clever voice that can be expected from the "New York Times"...Many fascinating problems are explained in language that the layperson will understand, without relying on equations; those with more than a passing interest in mathematics will find many topics of interest worthy of further reading. This compilation of real-world applications will interest those with an inclination toward mathematics or problem-solving." --"Publishers Weekly""" "Collecting articles of a mathematics bent from three centuries of pieces found in America's most celebrated daily newspapers, Kolata (senior writer, "New York Times", "Flu: The Story of the Great Influenza Pandemic of 1918 and the Search for the Virus that Cause It") displays her expertise as an editor in a book that is both a history of modern mathematics--as an academic, social, and political phenomenon--and a Who's Who of great science/math writers . . . The book is divided into thematic sections and . . . Among topics covered are the National Security Agency's (NSA's) threats to mathematicians writing papers with code-breaking applications; the celebrated story of Andrew Wiles's proof of Fermat's Last Theorem; Grigori Perelman's confirmation of the Poincare conjecture and his subsequent, Bobby Fischer-like, disappearance. These articles, both feature pieces and news reports, were all written at the time of what they cover, thus offering an immediacy lacking in some popular histories. Some of the pieces included here are important and some are curiosities, but all are absorbing. Verdict: Recommended for casual and serious math enthusiasts."--"Library Journal"

About the Author

Gina Kolata is a senior writer at the *New York Times*, where she reports on science and medicine; and a two-time Pulitzer Prize finalist. She has written several books, including *Rethinking Thin: The New Science of Weight Loss—and The Myths and Realities of Dieting*, which was a finalist for the Quill book awards, and the national bestseller *Flu: The Story of the Great Influenza Pandemic of 1918 and the Search for the Virus that Caused It* (both Farrar, Straus and Giroux).

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