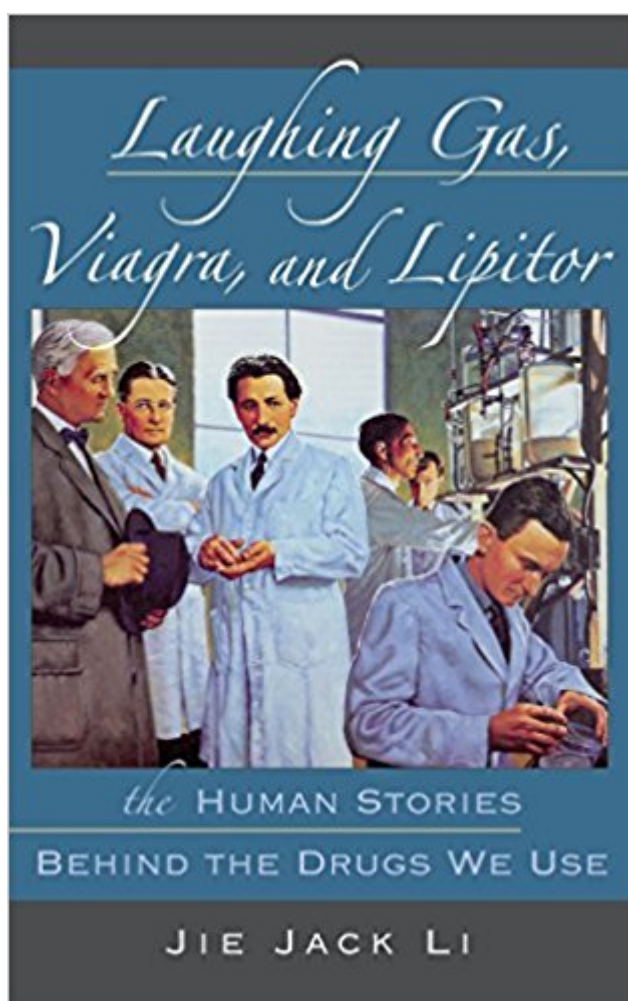


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Laughing Gas, Viagra, And Lipitor: The Human Stories Behind The Drugs We Use



Synopsis

The stories behind drug discovery are fascinating, full of human and scientific interest. This is a book on the history of drug discovery that highlights the intellectual splendor of discoverers as well as the human frailty associated with them. History is replete with examples of breakthrough medicines that have saved millions of lives. Ether as an anesthetic by Morton; penicillin as an antibiotic by Fleming; and insulin as an anti-diabetic by Banting are just a few examples. The discoverers of these medicines are doubtlessly benefactors to mankind--for instance, without penicillin, 75% of us probably would not be alive because some of our parents or grandparents would have succumbed to infections. Dr. Jack Li, a medicinal chemist who is intimately involved with drug discovery, has assembled an astounding amount of facts and information behind important drugs through extensive literature research and interviews with many inventors of the drugs including Viagra and Lipitor. There have been many myths and inaccuracies associated with those legendary drugs. The inventors' perspectives afforded this book an invaluable accuracy and insight because history is not history unless it is true. The text is supplemented by many anecdotes, pictures and postage stamps. Both specialist and layman will find *Laughing Gas, Viagra, and Lipitor* informative and entertaining. Students in chemistry, pharmacy, and medicine, workers in healthcare and high school science teachers will find this book most useful.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Laughing Gas, Viagra, and Lipitor: The Hunam Stories behind the Drugs We Use treats readers to

the inspiring tales of discovery of dozens of drugs from digitalis to anesthetics to today's blockbuster pharmaceuticals."--C&EN News

Jie Jack Li is a Medicinal Chemist at Pfizer Global Research and Development.

When I bought this book, I didn't quite know what to expect, other than the story of how some drugs are made. I didn't know if it would cover a few "blockbuster" drugs or entire classes of drugs and I didn't know if it would be written for a lay person or a scientist. Having been fascinated with drug synthesis for years, I bought the book and hoped for the best. And, the best is what I discovered. This book, written by a biopharmacologist, could have been a nightmarish read due to the complexity of the subject matter. And, while some knowledge of chemistry and biology is needed to fully comprehend the book, it is written in a way so that most lay people will be able to understand the most important material included. Yes, some of the information will be over the head of the average reader, but I'm not sure it could have been made simpler without losing some of the very necessary information needed for the formation of these compounds. Despite my fears, the book does cover a wide range of drugs in a wide range of classes. Each chapter is devoted to a class of drug, and the sub headings are devoted to either specific drugs, or their groupings. The chapters, in order are: * The Cancer drugs* Drugs to Kill Germs* Cardiovascular Drugs: From Nitroglycerin to Lipitor* Sex and Drugs* Drugs of the Mind* Diabetes Drugs* Anesthetics* Anti-Inflammatory Drugs. The detail in each chapter highlights and explores the various drugs within the class that made them special, noteworthy or historical to medicine. The details are often times amazing, and fun, and provide an insight into how researchers work. The processes that go into finding a drug are amazing, and it is a miracle that any of us has a drug in the medicine cabinet at all. Who would have thought that aspirin was once a prescription drug, while heroin was available over the counter? Or that some medicinal chemists will test, literally, hundreds of thousands of compounds looking for the one that does something (anything)? These are numerous other facts can be found throughout the book, but I won't divulge more in an effort not to spoil anything. Do not be mistaken by the title; the book is serious reading and does require some knowledge of chemistry and biology to fully understand the material. It can, however, be read with a note to history if you pass over the physical equations. The author did do a fabulous job of taking arcane and difficult chemistry and turning it into material that is very readable. If you have any interest in drugs, science or research methodology, buy the book and enjoy! It is a wonderful look at what happens in the ivory towers of the pharmaceutical industry, with an additional peek into academia. The infighting

between factions is just an added bonus!

Very interesting book showing the initial use of some drugs. I recommend

This book is very well written and tells each story about the drug in an engaging and interesting manner. I was very impressed with the background research that went into presenting these facts. A very good read and full of worthwhile information. The structural formulas for the compounds was very valuable.

Really quite informative. Perhaps the most interesting point is that most of the development of a marketable drug is in the upscaling to the manufacturing process. Some drugs never make it to market because they can not be mass produced. Also, our system may not be the best, but the slow process seems to prevent big mistakes.

this was a fascinating history of how medications were developed. I was both entranced and horrified by some of the stories.

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