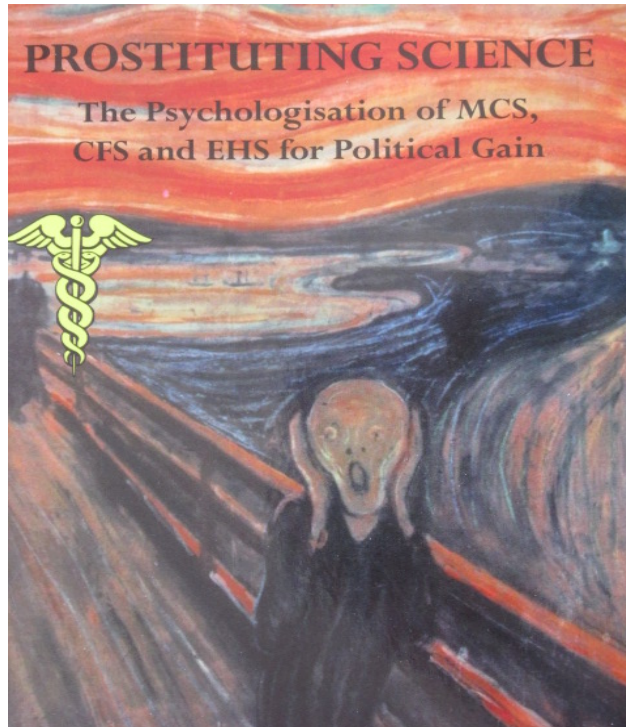


Book review of:

**Prostituting Science: The psychologisation of
MCS, CFS and EHS for Political Gain**
by **Diana Crumpler**



Keywords: psychologisation, psychologizing, chemical sensitivity, MCS, chronic fatigue syndrome, myalgic encephalomyelitis, CFS, electrical sensitivity, electrical hypersensitivity, light sensitivity, pesticides, abuse, medical abuse, Diana Crumpler, Cindy Duehring

This book deserves to be read far beyond Australia where it is published. It is a brilliant and thoughtfully written book about how the medical system has mistreated people with environmental illnesses that did not fit nicely into the present medical dogma.

The first part of the book presents the author's own story, where she got sick with multiple chemical sensitivity and chronic fatigue in the 1980s. She gave birth to three children who all became sick at a very young age. This probably all happened because of the frequent pesticide spraying in their farming community.

The kids may also have been poisoned by her breast milk, which science has since found is a way for a mother to shed her toxic burden.

Diana Crumpler continued to get sicker and sicker. By the 1990s the family moved to a large farm in an area where there is little pesticide use, but by then she had also become severely sensitive to sound, light and electromagnetic radiation. She had to wear hat, gloves and a face mask to go outside in the daytime. During a rare visit to a mall teenagers made fun of her appearance.

Her health continued to decline and she suffered from migraines, seizures, a spastic bowel and paralyzed legs. She had to live in total darkness with her husband sitting with a lamp in an adjacent room to read books to her and take dictation of letters to her friends.

The Australian health authorities were very unhelpful. She needed medical attention and was too sick to travel to a clinic, but they were not willing to send a doctor out to see her. Eventually they let her be visited by some social workers, but that was all. As her need for medical help became more dire the authorities responded by sending an ambulance and a police car to forcefully take her to a hospital, where she was treated as a psychiatric patient. At least she also received some appropriate treatment, but it is a harrowing story of medical abuse she had to endure there.

The book then provides a compelling tour of the science that points to how everyday chemicals that most people take for granted may be the underlying cause of many of the diseases of civilization, such as asthma, lupus, autism, Crohn's, diabetes, arthritis, obesity and cancer, that were rare a century ago, but now are so common.

Crumpler also describes several disturbing scientific studies on how commonly used pesticides can affect neurotransmitters in the brain and thereby cause lowered intelligence, schizophrenia, depression, violence and suicide. Children are shown to be particularly sensitive to pesticide exposures.

Unfortunately, medical science is much more focused on treating sick people than preventing sickness — presumably because it is much less controversial and much more profitable, though the book doesn't state that outright.

Further on we hear several stories about other people who have been mistreated and abused by an uncomprehending medical system in countries such as Australia, United States, Britain and Denmark. Some stories involve the forceful removal of sick children in the mistaken belief that the cause of illness is overprotective

parents. Even though the child did not improve in foster care, they were not returned with any apology (has anybody ever heard doctors apologize for their mistakes?).

People with environmental illness have been subjected to the worst kind of psychobabble imaginable. One example is an American woman who got sick from the fumes of idling cars whenever she stopped at a traffic light. A psychiatrist somehow contorted that into a Freudian problem stemming from the fact that this white woman was married to a black man!

Open-minded physicians who were able to see the actual connections have also been subjected to ridicule and censure. On page 225 we hear about a physician at the famous Mayo clinic who nearly lost his job when he insisted that allergic reactions could affect the brain. His job was saved by the intervention of one of the Mayo brothers who himself had cerebral reactions to allergens.

Crumpler also tells the story of Cindy Duehring, who lived in the United States under conditions very similar to Crumpler herself. The two women corresponded for a long time until Duehring's tragic death due to a pesticide exposure when her neighbor sprayed the lawn.

Very few of these stories have a positive outcome, though we do hear the story about a man who was in a psychiatric hospital in America because he believed he was Jesus Christ. Fortunately, the psychiatrist was so open-minded that he discovered the patient had these "Jesus episodes" whenever gas fumes wafted up from the hospital kitchen on the floor below the room. Moving the patient helped greatly.

The book is thoroughly referenced to allow the reader to see the original sources. It took a lot of courage to write this book, which is published under the author's real name. The medical world can viciously attack people who tell the truth about their mistakes and abuses by means of defamation lawsuits that are very expensive to defend against. That may be why Crumpler scrupulously avoids identifying details in some of the stories.

The book is globally relevant. There are just a few references to local personalities, the Australian support organization (AESSRA) and its magazine *Sensitivity Matters* that may baffle a foreign reader, but that in no way mars this important book. Highly recommended.

The book was published in 2014 by Inkling Australia. People outside Australia can order the book by contacting Bernie Crumpler (bernie.crumpler@gmail.com).

Other MCS/EHS reviews

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