

**Leading academic casts doubt on expensive prescribing
by dispensing doctors**



A leading academic has published a rebuttal to the article by Dr Ben Goldacre which criticised the cost-effectiveness of prescribing by dispensing doctors.

Following independent analysis, in a response to the article published on [BMJ Open](#) Professor Darrin Baines, Health Economist at Bournemouth University, has cast significant doubt over the robustness of the conclusions drawn by Dr Goldacre and his colleagues. He has also questioned the methodology and use of data in the study. To paraphrase the title of Dr Goldacre's well-known book, the Dispensing Doctors' Association (DDA) believes that the article should be renamed 'bad science.'

Commenting on Dr Goldacre's article, which was published on BMJ Open in February, the chairman of the DDA Dr Richard West said: "I have no problem with academic analysis of the work of dispensing doctors, provided that the methodology and use of data are robust.

"However, I have an enormous problem with studies which call into question the morality and ethics of hard-working doctors, at a time of unprecedented workload and workforce shortages in general practice, without any clear evidence. Dr Goldacre and his colleagues ought to know better than to promote such poor quality analysis in the media."

The DDA has always been resolute that doctors should prescribe what is best for the patient first, the NHS second and the practice third.

Dr Baines' response is entitled: Prescribing in dispensing practices: A response to Goldacre et al, available [online] on BMJ Open, doi March 24, 2019, at:
<https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/9/2/e026886.responses>

For more information:

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Notes to editors

Dr Goldacre et al. Do doctors in dispensing practices with a financial conflict of interest

prescribe more expensive drugs? A cross-sectional analysis of English primary care prescribing data, available online at [BMJ Open](#).