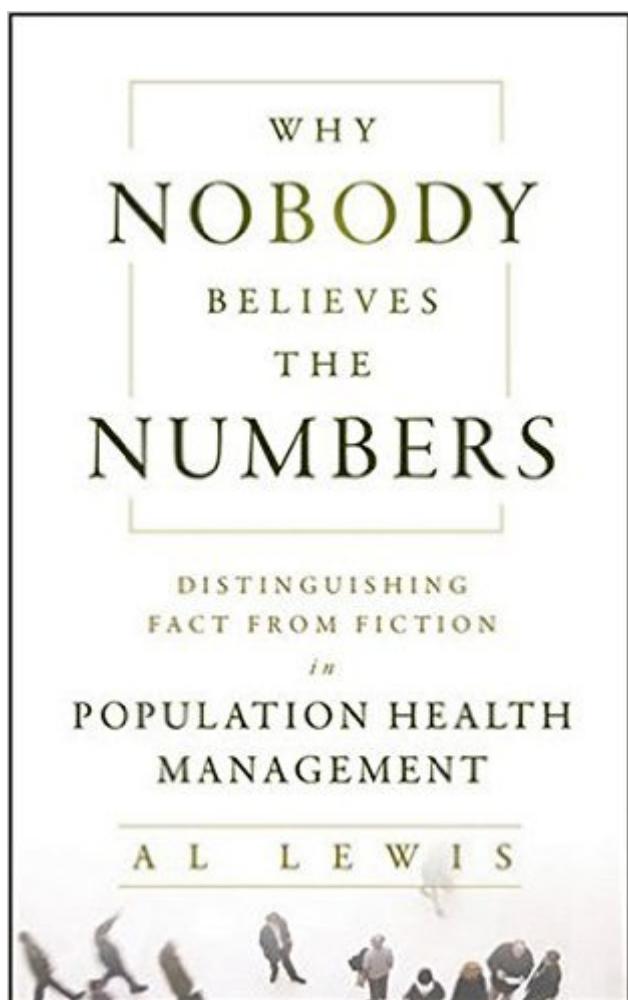


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Why Nobody Believes The Numbers: Distinguishing Fact From Fiction In Population Health Management



Synopsis

Why Nobody Believes the Numbers introduces a unique viewpoint to population health outcomes measurement: Results/ROIs should be presented as they are, not as we wish they would be. This viewpoint contrasts sharply with vendor/promoter/consultant claims along two very important dimensions: (1) Why Nobody Believes presents outcomes/ROIs achievable right here on this very planet | (2) calculated using actual data rather than controlled substances. Indeed, nowhere in healthcare is it possible to find such sharply contrasting worldviews, methodologies, and grips on reality. Why Nobody Believes the Numbers includes 12 case studies of vendors, carriers, and consultants who were apparently playing hooky the day their teacher covered fifth-grade math, as told by an author whose argument style can be so persuasive that he was once able to convince a resort to sell him a timeshare. The book's lesson: no need to believe what your vendor tells you -- instead you can estimate your own savings using ingredients you already have in your kitchen. • Don't be intimidated just because you lack a PhD in biostatistics, or even a Masters, Bachelor's, high-school equivalency diploma or up-to-date inspection sticker. Why Nobody Believes the Numbers explains how to determine if the ROIs are real...and why they usually aren't. You'll learn how to: Figure out whether you are "moving the needle" or just crediting a program with changes that would have happened anyway Judge whether the ROIs your vendors report are plausible or even arithmetically possible Synthesize all these insights into RFPs and contracts that truly hold vendors accountable for results

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Customer Reviews

One of the founders of my organization(The Leapfrog Group) recommended this book so I bought it expecting to plow through a dense analysis on measuring health outcomes. Okay, this is my field, but I expected the book to be work not entertainment. I was wrong. My 5 year old wanted a turn reading the book because every time I picked it up I was truly LOL. Honestly this guy is every bit as funny as Dave Barry!Once the laughter subsided though I reread the book to figure out what the point was, and that is when I realized how important this is to health care, particularly for employers investing in health benefits, including taxpayers. Many programs in wellness and disease management are not working as advertised, and Al Lewis shows us how we got snowed to think they were. What makes me mad is to think of the money wasted on all this. We do not have extra money for fruitless adventures in health care!So this is a terrific read and game changing.

Why Nobody Believes The Numbers is an excellent book that I wish I had ten years ago when I was the Chief Medical Officer of UnitedHealthcare and trying to calculate the ROI of disease management programs. Looking back, demanding this logical methodology/approach from ourselves and from our vendors would have quickly identified whether we were making a difference in the cost and care of patients. And, ultimately, we could have saved insurers and employers LOTS of money since most programs don't generate an ROI and we would have either not implemented them at all or quickly shut them down. Instead, we maintained them with the false hope that they were decreasing medical costs. Thank goodness this book is so darn funny...or else I'd cry at all the time and money we wasted.Also, the principles in this book ALSO apply to the ROI analysis of other health management services: apps/games, wellness/prevention programs services, ACOs/Patient Centered Medical Homes, etc etc. The title (....Distinguishing Fact from Fiction in Population Health Management) is too limited...maybe he can edit that in the 2nd edition.Bottom line: This book should be required reading for investors, employers, health care executives, insurers, and entrepreneurs....or at least for the smart ones that aren't afraid of intellectual integrity and value truth.Why Nobody Believes the Numbers: Distinguishing Fact from Fiction in Population Health Management

Al Lewis managed to squeeze several categories of lessons into this book, all of which make it worth reading. Other reviews have extolled the virtues of Al's dive into wellness and DM so I'm going to focus on three benefits that I got from reading it, all of which are likely good reasons for you to read it.First, he forced me to realize that my statistical thinking had become very lazy. It wasn't

that I was falling for statistics that could not pass a plausibility test but I had stopped thinking about why they didn't pass. A few chapters into this and I felt like my edge had been reset. Second, the book teaches a very simple lesson in business and life: it is not easy to deliver great results. The claims made by some of the DM companies are humorous but no more humorous than claims made by many companies in many industries. Let this be a lesson on similar chicanery going on all around us. The claims are similar to promises that led to truth in advertising yet we probably miss it more often than we see it. Finally, results do not happen overnight. Change takes time. It needs to be thought through, It costs money. It has to accommodate human behavior and differences. The Highmark, BlackBox and Quantum examples all support that simple conclusion but it is a conclusion that we often skip in favor of a 350% cost improvement in Year 1. I enjoyed the book and will recommend it within healthcare to make smarter buyers and users and outside of healthcare to give others an example of the kinds of examples they should be watching for in their own industries.

The most respected and successful guy in the field (full disclosure: I know him and like most of the cognoscenti in this field, have great respect for him) is "breaking ranks" with the industry to acknowledge in a rigorous manner, albeit with world-class humor-writing in places, that vendor and consultant outcomes claims are a joke perpetrated on the HR departments. Claims range from invalid to hilarious to impossible to dishonest to criminal (the North Carolina Medicaid section is a page-turner), and even the "official" guidelines have an obviously self-serving bias towards overstating savings. Why Nobody Believes the Numbers isn't going to make Al any friends among the true believers, and I would expect to see more reviews like the one by Krishna, flamethrowers who can't handle the truth. Fact is, not a single wellness/DM savings claim made by a single vendor is checked for basic plausibility, and I'm sure Krishna's is no different, which is why he's acting out -- anonymously, of course. If Krishna is so smart why didn't he claim the \$10,000 reward for finding a mistake in the book?

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