

This history of diseases, treatments and vaccines appeared in 2013. A few voices in the wilderness such as [Dr. Andrew Wakefield](#) and [Dr. Vernon Coleman](#) had been claiming for years that vaccines were dangerous and didn't work. The establishment appeared to have dealt with them effectively. They lost their medical licenses, were drummed out of professional societies, and were "deplatformed" from the Internet. Wakefield's primary concern was vaccine injury. He made a strong case for the correlation between vaccination and autism. Coleman's emphasis was on the fact that they simply did not work.

Humphries and Bystrianyuk, who were published a few years earlier, took a less risky approach with this book. They did not make their own claims to tackle the medical/pharmaceutical/government apparatus head on. Instead, they laboriously gathered contemporary accounts of vaccine effectiveness and injuries reaching back to the late 18th century. It is hard to dispute the copious accounts of "vaccine hesitancy" and the incidents that promoted it published more than a century ago. The accounts are undoubtedly genuine; the only question is whether the opinions expressed had merit. Though their book was not greeted with any enthusiasm, they could not be so viciously attacked for merely reporting history.

Several other books on vaccination came out around 2019, just before Covid emerged to vividly demonstrate their importance. These are [Crooked](#), about the connection between vaccines and autism; [The Moth in the Iron Lung](#) about the history of polio and why vaccines should probably not be credited for its disappearance; [Turtles All the Way Down](#), video review [here](#), about the government approval process for childhood vaccines and regulatory capture; [Vaccines - Truth, Lies and Controversy](#), also about childhood vaccine effectiveness and side effects.

A vast number of books have been written since Covid. Here are links to reviews of [Cause unknown](#) by Ed Dowd, [Covid 19 and the global predators - we are the prey](#) by Peter and Ginger Breggins, and [War Room DailyClout Pfizer Documents Analysis Volunteers' Reports Find Out What Pfizer, FDA Tried to Conceal](#) by Naomi Wolf. It should be clear how timely Dissolving Illusions turns out to have been.

One of the great things about a not-for-Amazon review is the freedom to format things in a sensible way. The text box shows the table of contents.

Chapter 1 describes the terrible sanitary conditions of European cities at the time of the Industrial Revolution. Too many people in the cities. No running water. No sewer systems. Animals everywhere in the city - barnyard animals, horses and rats. Offal and dead animals abounded. Chapter 2 describes the horrors of child labor – long hours, terrible working conditions, inadequate food, and filth. Chapter 3 describes the characteristics of the endemic diseases associated with poor sanitation:

Typhoid Fever

Cholera

Typhus

Diphtheria

Dysentery

Pertussis

Scarlet Fever

Measles

Yellow Fever

Tuberculosis

Puerperal Fever (childbirth fever)

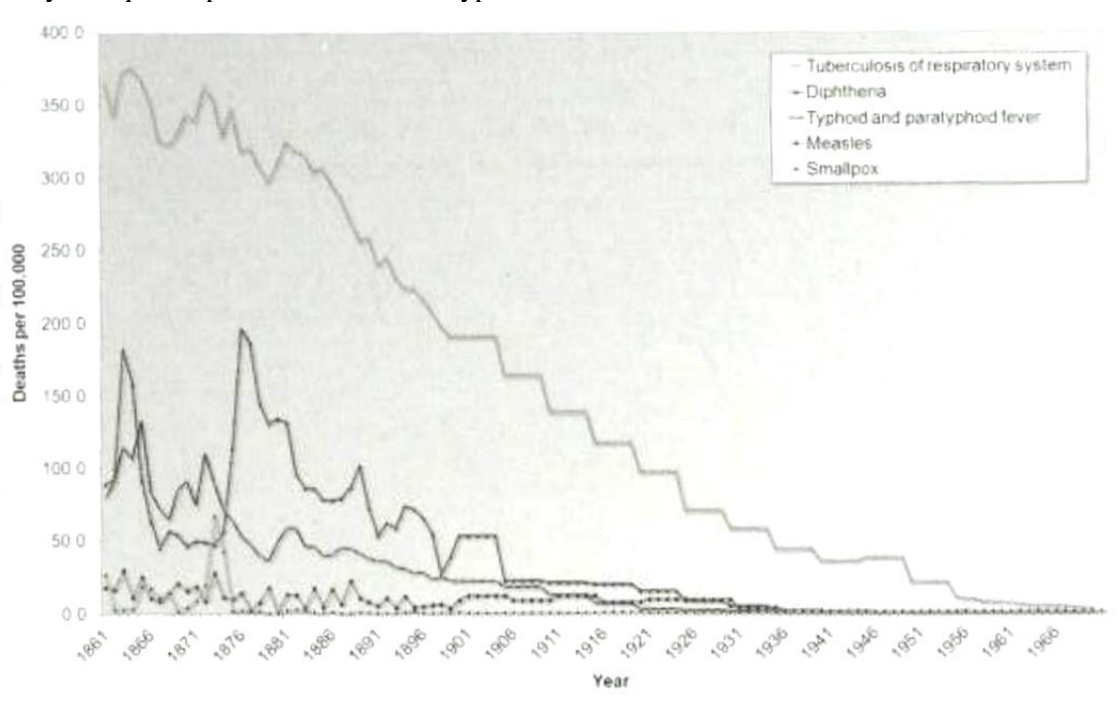
The descriptions, often with photographs, are useful reminders of what the bad old days were like. Two other diseases that they cover in depth in later chapters, smallpox and polio, are not as closely related to sanitation.

Chapters four through nine are mostly concerned with smallpox. They describe the first attempts at vaccination,

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which predate Edward Jenner by several decades. They describe the crudity of the vaccination process, the profound ignorance of the way immunity worked, and the frequent and catastrophic disasters precipitated by the vaccines. Chapter 7 describes the anti-vaccine rebellion in Leichestre and the superior health outcomes they experienced abandoning vaccination. Chapter 8 describes the pitched ongoing battles between the government and medical establishment, which mandated vaccines, and the people, who saw their consequences and rebelled, even after the Leichestre success had become widely acknowledged.

Chapter 11 relates the timeframes of the disappearance of infectious disease with that of vaccines. On account of better nutrition and sanitation the diseases were disappearing well before vaccines came on the scene. The graphs are many and quite repetitive. This one is typical:



Some of them show the dates that vaccines became available, most of them in the mid 20th century. There are some diseases like tuberculosis, the top line in this graph, for which vaccines were never introduced.

Polio is a special case, the subject of a single very long chapter 12. The history these authors tell fairly well tracks the one given in *The Moth in the Iron Lung*. There are three major strains of the polio virus. They are endemic in the human gut, only causing problems when they somehow escape and get into the spinal cord, a process that appears to be mediated by environmental factors such as pesticides. Polio's disappearance coincides with DDT being banned. It was never much of a problem in less developed countries where DDT was not used. It remains a problem in India, where DDT is still being applied.

Chapters 13 and 14, recounting the stories for whooping cough and measles, are similar. The diseases themselves became significantly less virulent over time. Better diagnosis standards were put in place about the same time as vaccines were rolled out. The drop in reported cases is as much a factor of more stringent diagnosis criteria as anything else. In any case, the diseases are generally not life threatening. Vitamins fortify the immune system against them. There are effective treatments available. Since catching them in childhood affords long-lasting immunity, it may be better just to let people contract mild cases early in life.

The remaining chapters of the book address the importance of good nutrition, vitamins and minerals. Herbs and spices such as cinnamon, garlic and fenugreek, known for centuries, are cheap, safe and effective. Unfortunately, they are increasingly forgotten in the age of big medicine and big pharma.

Disease and vaccines are a vast topic. *Dissolving Illusions* provides an essential historical understanding of the emergence of both diseases and vaccines. Other essential books address vaccine safety and effectiveness, side effects, and political considerations.