# Article information:

What's in the placebo?  
<https://maryannedemasi.substack.com/p/whats-in-the-placebo>

# Article summary:

1. Placebos used in clinical trials can be either active or inactive, with the aim of assessing the safety and efficacy of a therapeutic drug or vaccine.

2. Inactive placebos should closely resemble the sensory and visual aspects of the experimental drug to maintain blinding throughout the trial.

3. The exact formulation of a placebo is often undisclosed and proprietary information, raising concerns about the reliability of trial data and transparency.

# Article rating:

Appears strongly imbalanced: The article is written in a biased or one-sided way, and the information it provides is not trustworthy enough to be considered a reliable source. You should consult other sources to find reliable information on the presented issues.

# Article analysis:

The article titled "What's in the placebo?" discusses the lack of transparency surrounding the formulation and testing of placebos used in clinical trials. While it raises valid concerns about the potential biases and lack of information regarding placebos, it also presents some unsupported claims and fails to explore counterarguments.

One potential bias in the article is its reliance on a conversation between Joe Rogan and Robert F Kennedy Jr as a source. Both individuals have been known to promote controversial views, and their discussion may not provide a balanced or objective perspective on the topic. Additionally, the article does not provide any other sources or studies to support its claims about placebos in general or specific examples mentioned.

The article suggests that drug companies often manufacture their own placebos for clinical trials but fail to disclose detailed information about their composition. While this may be true in some cases, it does not consider that regulatory agencies require drug manufacturers to submit detailed information about placebos as part of licensing applications. The absence of this information in peer-reviewed publications may be due to journal policies rather than an intentional effort by drug manufacturers to hide important details.

Furthermore, the article implies that undisclosed excipients in placebos could unintentionally cause side effects and raise concerns about trial data reliability. However, it does not provide evidence or examples to support these claims. Without concrete evidence, these assertions remain speculative and unsupported.

The article also fails to explore potential reasons why drug manufacturers might keep placebo formulations proprietary. It is possible that disclosing this information could lead to intellectual property issues or compromise blinding during clinical trials. By not considering these factors, the article presents a one-sided view of the issue.

Additionally, while the article highlights potential risks associated with undisclosed placebo contents, it does not adequately address whether these risks are noted or mitigated during regulatory review processes. It would be important to consider whether regulatory agencies thoroughly evaluate placebo formulations for safety before approving drugs for market use.

Overall, while the article raises valid concerns about the lack of transparency surrounding placebos in clinical trials, it presents a one-sided view and relies on unsupported claims. It would benefit from providing a more balanced perspective, exploring counterarguments, and presenting evidence to support its assertions.

# Topics for further research:

* Placebo formulation disclosure requirements in clinical trials
* Regulatory review process for placebo safety in drug approvals
* Intellectual property issues and placebo formulation disclosure
* Blinding methods and considerations in clinical trials
* Studies on the potential side effects of undisclosed excipients in placebos
* Perspectives on placebo transparency from other experts or researchers

# Report location:

<https://www.fullpicture.app/item/7e68ce452b49a704e76b3fe231233d94>