



# Drugs for Life: How Pharmaceutical Companies Define Our Health (Experimental futures)

*Joseph Dumit*

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Every year the average number of prescriptions purchased by Americans increases, as do healthcare expenditures, which are projected to reach one-fifth of the U.S. gross domestic product by 2020. In *Drugs for Life*, Joseph Dumit considers how our burgeoning consumption of medicine and cost of healthcare not only came to be, but also came to be taken for granted. For several years, Dumit attended pharmaceutical industry conferences; spoke with marketers, researchers, doctors, and patients; and surveyed the industry's literature regarding strategies to expand markets for prescription drugs. He concluded that underlying the continual growth in medications, disease categories, costs, and insecurity is a relatively new perception of ourselves as inherently ill and in need of chronic treatment. This perception is based on clinical trials that we have largely outsourced to pharmaceutical companies. Those companies in turn see clinical trials as investments and measure the value of those investments by the size of the market and profits that they will create. They only ask questions for which the answer is more medicine. *Drugs for Life* challenges our understanding of health, risks, facts, and clinical trials, the very concepts used by pharmaceutical companies to grow markets to the point where almost no one can imagine a life without prescription drugs.

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