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Curing MS: How Science Is Solving the Mysteries of Multiple Sclerosis

Howard L. Weiner
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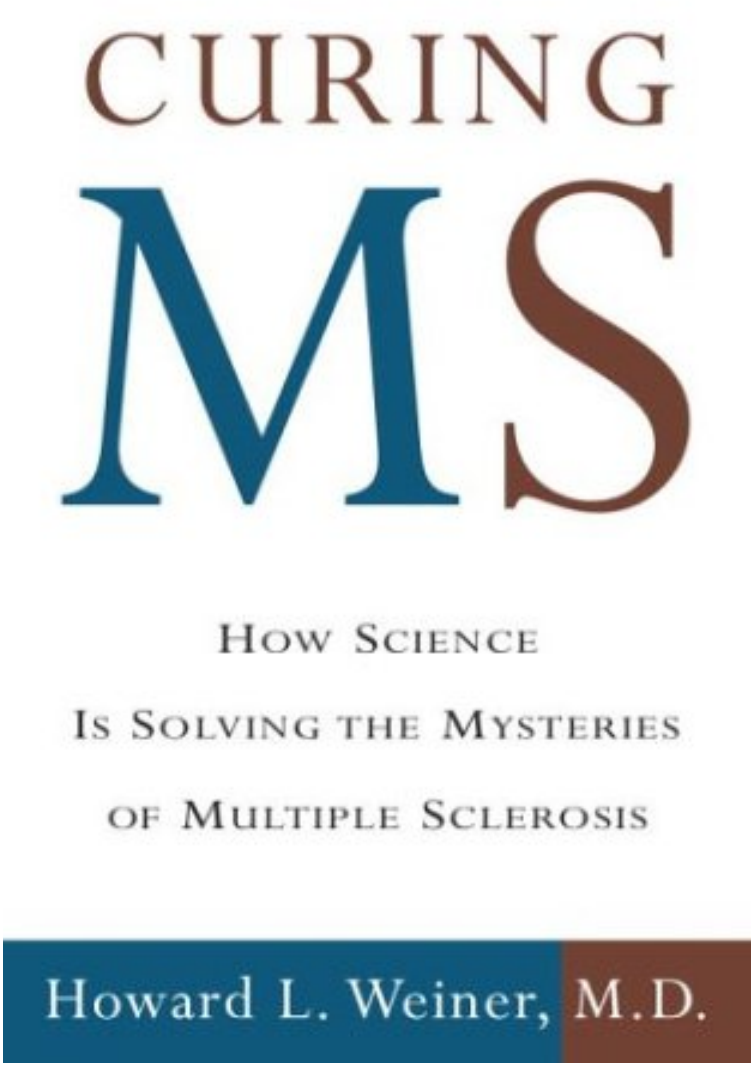

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Howard L. Weiner : Curing MS: How Science Is Solving the Mysteries of Multiple Sclerosis before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Curing MS: How Science Is Solving the Mysteries of Multiple Sclerosis:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. This is an awesome book. I highly recommend itBy Mark ThrasherThis is an awesome book. I highly recommend it. I'm glad to be diagnosed in this day and age as there are

now so many options available.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Curing?By E. DettreyWell it is an interesting read, but it shows no cure. It does show the history on how medicine has been looking for cures. They developed therapies, but only therapies that can get you a little better or remission if caught early. And it sees there is a stage for MS that doesn't respond at all to any therapy. So in the end, this was a sad read, rather than a hopeful read. Not a bad book to see what MS stages and therapies are if your doctor just doesn't mention this all to you if you have MS.7 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Account of Advances in MS TreatmentBy Mary FolleyVery accessible history of the research and advances in the treatment of MS over the past several decades. Weiner has a straightforward style that explains complex topics by relating them to the symptoms and experiences of his patients. I found it very informative in learning about the disease after my own diagnosis and how the different treatments my doctors recommended work.

What causes multiple sclerosis?When will there be a cure?Dr. Howard Weiner has spent nearly three decades trying to find answers to the mysteries of multiple sclerosis, an utterly confounding and debilitating disease that afflicts almost half a million Americans. Curing MS is his moving, personal account of the long-term scientific quest to pinpoint the origins of the disease and to find a breakthrough treatment for its victims. Dr. Weiner has been at the cutting edge of MS research and drug development, and he describes in clear and illuminating detail the science behind the symptoms and how new drugs may hold the key to "taming the monster." From the "Twenty-one Points" of MS--a concise breakdown of the knowns and unknowns of the disease--to stories from the frontlines of laboratories and hospitals, Curing MS offers a message of hope about new treatments and makes a powerful argument that a cure can--and will--be found.

From The New England Journal of MedicineScientists, medical researchers, and academic physicians share a fundamental shortcoming: we consistently fail to translate and describe our professional world -- its struggles, its successes, and even its basic workings -- to the general public. In science, this flaw, lamentably, affects the people who direct funding policies, and in medicine it denies knowledge to patients who hope for improvements in and possible cures for their condition. As science rapidly grows more complex and technical, the gap widens between scientific realities and public perceptions of how science works. Indeed, the daily televised diet of medical breakthroughs fails to convey the complexities of medical progress and the difficulties involved in bringing a bench observation to the stage of useful therapy. (Figure) Enter Howard Weiner, a veteran neurologist with decades of experience in medical research on multiple sclerosis, with a monograph on the medical history of such research and the clinical realities of the disease. He draws a rich, fascinating portrait of important failures and successes in this difficult field of medicine. Almost an autobiography, this book is well written and detailed. It also appeals through down-to-earth language that avoids trivialization and places complex biology within the grasp of the interested but uninitiated reader. With mastery, Weiner mixes anecdote with the teaching of biologic, statistical, and medical processes, rendering a living tale that keeps the reader's attention. There is much passion here as the author highlights decades of continuing frustration in the search for causes of the clinically varied and elusive, chronically progressive condition of multiple sclerosis and its many subtypes. This book will be instructive and interesting for patients, their families, and many people with other chronic diseases. The book manages to entertain while drawing a clear picture of the evolving process that drives medical progress, however slowly and ponderously. Few issues remain untouched, from the need for (and danger of) ego as the investigator weathers the many frustrations before the rare successes occur to the stony path from bench observation to bedside use. The tone is inherently optimistic as the book highlights the development and regulatory approval of the small but slowly growing number of drugs approved or already used for the treatment of multiple sclerosis. By and large, the author avoids diving too deeply into science and technology, and he freely and frequently admits that an understanding of the mechanisms involved in multiple sclerosis (and in most other autoimmune diseases) is missing. Much of this book is about clinical trials in a difficult field. The trials suffer from a lack of predictive, surrogate markers of intermediate to long-term outcomes, as well as from a paucity of practical measures of effectiveness, with magnetic resonance imaging a difficult but irreplaceable tool. The author excels at illustrating these points and at emphasizing the need for proper controls, questions, and answers that can be interpreted with confidence in such trials. The title, Curing MS, is bold and misleading, but the author himself corrects the misconception about the likelihood of cures for this disease in the last chapter. The backbone of the book is the "Weiner list" of 21 hypotheses that describe the author's view of multiple sclerosis as a primary autoimmune disease that, possibly, is caused by unknown infectious episodes. Not all of these hypotheses are uniformly acknowledged in the field, but most are in the mainstream; some, such as a strong focus on cytokines, are somewhat dated, though not inappropriately for what is basically a history of the medicine surrounding multiple sclerosis. This book does not attempt to provide a critical assessment of the status of therapy for the disease -- it really does not explain "how science is solving the mysteries of multiple sclerosis," as the subtitle claims -- but it does provide a realistic look at the field, with its challenges, its origins, and the more recent achievements that have been made with a modicum of therapeutic tools. Shawn Winer, Ph.D.Copyright 2005 Massachusetts Medical Society. All rights reserved. The New

England Journal of Medicine is a registered trademark of the MMS.From BooklistIt is estimated that more than 400,000 people in the U.S. have been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, which affects the nerve fibers in the brain and spinal cord. Moreover, MS--like juvenile diabetes and rheumatoid arthritis, an autoimmune disease--is the number one cause of paralysis in children. No one yet knows what causes the degenerative and progressive malady, but it is believed everyone may have the capability to contract it. Although there have been astounding leaps forward in the creation of treatment options, there is still no cure. Those figures and facts represent but a handful of the topics Harvard neurologist Weiner, founder-director of the Multiple Sclerosis Center at Massachusetts General Hospital, discusses in what ends up as a deconstruction of the last 30 years of his own and general MS research and of experience in treating patients with the puzzling disorder. A noted authority and a pretty good writer, Weiner deftly summarizes what is currently known about treatments and the potential for a cure. Donna ChavezCopyright American Library Association. All rights reserved An absolute must-read for anyone afflicted by MS, family member or caregiver, or treating physician. Isadore Rosenfeld, M.D.,bestselling author of Dr. Isadore Rosenfelds Breakthrough Health 2004A rich, fascinating portrait of important failures and successes in this difficult field of medicine . . . this book is well written and detailed. With mastery, Weiner mixes anecdote with the teaching of biologic, statistical, and medical processes, rendering a living tale that keeps the readers attention. The book manages to entertain while drawing a clear picture of the evolving process that drives medical progress, however slowly and ponderously. New England Journal of MedicineHoward Weiner offers the reader an intimate, insiders view of the ongoing scientific effort to understand and ultimately to cure MS. Written in lucid and accessible prose, the travails and triumphs of modern medicine are brought to life. Jerome Groopman, M.D., author of The Anatomy of HopeFrom the Trade Paperback edition.