

# Placebo Power

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APS Fellow and Charter Member Irving Kirsch, associate director of the Placebo Studies Program at Harvard Medical School, says the difference between the effect of a placebo and the effect of an antidepressant is minimal for most people.

“People get better when they take the drug, but it’s not the chemical ingredients of the drugs that are making them better,” Kirsch told Lesley Stael in a [60 Minutes interview](#), “it’s largely the placebo effect.”

The “placebo effect” may not be all in your head says Kirsch in the interview below:

Kirsch, I., Deacon, B.J., Huedo-Medina, T.B., Scoboria, A., Moore, T.J., & Johnson, B.T. (2008). Initial severity and antidepressant benefits: a meta-analysis of data submitted to the Food and Drug Administration. *PLoS medicine*, 5 (2) PMID: [18303940](#)