

How do placebos work?

- Social influences;
- Role expectation; doctor's job is to help, patient's role is to get better
- Classical conditioning; previous drugs have helped so new drug will help
- Operant conditioning; doctor rewards signs of improvement
- Cognitive influence; have strong belief in medicine and doctor abilities
- Anxiety reduction brings about relief and lessens pain
- Endorphin release inhibits pain signals so relief at being offered treatment can have a placebo effect
 - ↳ Studies suggest placebo response can be inhibited by administering an opiate antagonist (blocks opiate receptors); reversed placebo response
 - ↳ Naloxone blocks the body's own endorphins so increases pain levels

Central Role of Patient Expectations in Placebo Effects

Ogden, 2000

