



# Half of what your doctor learned will be dead wrong within 5 years

*and the Limits of Human Knowledge*

**Dr. David Sackett & Dr. Asem Malhotra**

*Ismā'īl bin Rafīq Muḥammad*

*PDF Edition  
1 July 2026*

# بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله رب العالمين، وصلى الله وسلم على نبيينا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين، أما بعد

We are often told to **'trust the science'** by some of those who attempt to sell and force Western commercialized medicine—along with their vaccine businesses—upon the individuals of society. This is as if human scientific knowledge is absolute, settled, and beyond question. Or, ***we rarely but sometimes see some Shaikhs in America claiming that vaccines are a matter in which a difference of opinion is not permissible regarding their permissibility, harms, and benefits.*** But is this really the truth?

Dr. David Sackett is widely regarded within the modern Western medical establishment — whose current dominance and institutional authority largely rests in the hands of the People of the Book, the followers of the Torah and the Gospel — as one of the founders of evidence-based medicine. He warned his students and his own colleagues that medical knowledge changes with new research, new experience, and new discoveries. He said:

***"50% of what you learn in medical school will turn out to be either outdated or dead wrong within 5 years of your graduation. The trouble is nobody can tell you which half, so you have to learn to learn on your own."***

— Dr. David Sackett

A non-Muslim cardiologist, Dr. Aseem Malhotra, also addressed this reality when speaking about the nature of modern medicine. He explained:

*“I think to understand the problems of modern medicine, you have to go back to square one, and that is understanding what medicine is. There is a false perception out there that medicine is an exact science, like, say, physics or chemistry, when in fact, it is a social science, the science of human beings. It is constantly evolving.*

*And to add to that, the father of the evidence-based medicine movement, Professor David Sackett, a Canadian epidemiologist, now deceased—and this has actually been proven—said: **‘50% of what you learn in medical school will turn out to be either outdated or dead wrong within five years of your graduation. The trouble is, nobody can tell you which half, so you have to learn to learn on your own.’***

*Now, most patients or members of the public hearing that would probably be quite surprised, to say the least. But we have to start from there, because part of the barriers to the truth of changing medical practice is really busting that myth that it is an exact science.*

*One of the public figures whose face became one of the most famous around the world was **Anthony Fauci**. And he said, when it came to the issue of managing COVID and even around the COVID vaccines, **‘Trust the science.’** And that did not make any sense to me, because medicine is not an exact science.”*

*— Dr. Aseem Malhotra*

Medical knowledge and medical books, despite their benefits, contain human effort, revision, trial, and error. Medical understanding changes. It corrects itself, abandons previous conclusions, and replaces old assumptions with new ones.

And even if someone were to argue that **medicine is an exact science like physics or chemistry**, the matter would still not change. None of these sciences, as human disciplines, are free from human limitation, error, correction, revision, and change. Physics, chemistry, biology, and medicine are all human attempts to understand the creation of Allah. Medical knowledge, as a human discipline, is not revelation from the All-Knowing, and therefore it is not protected from error.

So to treat medical books, scientific institutions, journals, or experts as though they possess flawless and final knowledge is not humility. Rather, it can become haughtiness, arrogance, and a form of wrongful arrogance and seeking elevation upon the earth. It is also one of the ways by which people, especially sick and vulnerable patients, may be harmed.

Allah, the Most High, the Lord of all the worlds, the All-Knowing, whose knowledge encompasses all things, the Lord of Adam, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (ﷺ), said while addressing all His servants in His revealed Book to the world:

﴿ تِلْكَ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا ۗ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ  
لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴾

“That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire **exaltedness upon the earth or corruption**. And the good end is for the people of taqwā.”

— Qur’an 28:83

﴿ هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ ۗ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴾

‘He is the First and the Last; **He is the Most High**, and the Innermost All-Knower; and **He has knowledge of all things.**’

— Qur'an al-Hadid:3

So, if even the best human science is always changing, where do we find absolute certainty? We must acknowledge that human understanding and knowledge—even of our own selves—is limited. Likewise, our knowledge of worldly causes and effects, science, cure, disease, and medicine is limited. The final and complete knowledge of the creation lies with the One who created us from non-existence.

And this creation itself is a clear proof of the existence, Lordship, power, wisdom, will, and creative ability of Allah. For something that exists, after previously not existing, cannot bring itself into existence, nor can it appear without knowledge, wisdom, power, will, and creative ability. Every created thing points to its Creator. The creation is therefore a sign of Allah's existence, His Lordship, His power (**qudrah**), His wisdom (**hikmah**), His will (**mashī'ah**), and His attribute of creating — for He is **al-Khāliq**, the Creator.

Allah, the Most High, said:

﴿اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۖ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ ﴿٦٢﴾ لَهُ مَقَالِيدُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ  
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾﴾

*'Allāh is the Creator of all things, and He is the Disposer of all affairs. To Him belong the keys of the Heavens and the Earth. And those who disbelieve in the signs of Allāh, they are the losers.'*

— Qur'an az-Zumar:62-63

And He (the Mighty and Majestic) said:

﴿أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمْ الْخَالِقُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ أَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ ۗ بَلْ لَا  
يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾﴾

**‘Were they created by nothing, or were they themselves the creators? Or did they create the Heavens and the Earth? Rather, they have no certainty.’**

— Qur’an, at-Tūr:35-36

This is a question that shakes the heart of every honest person: Were we created from nothing? Did we create ourselves? Did we create the heavens and the earth? The answer is clear. The creation must have a Creator, and that Creator is Allah, the Lord of all that exists.

**Shaikh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)** said:

وَهُوَ سُبْحَانَهُ قَدِيمٌ وَاجِبُ الوجودِ رَبُّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَمَلِيكُهُ هُوَ الخَالِقُ وَمَا سِوَاهُ مَخْلُوقٌ

“He, the Most Perfect and free of all imperfections, **is eternal, necessarily existent (wājib al-wujūd)**; the Lord of everything and its Sovereign. He is the Creator, and everything other than Him is created.”

— Bayān Talbīs al-Jahmiyyah (1/304) [abukhadeejah.com]

Allah, the Lord of all the worlds said:

﴿ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ ﴾

“**And they encompass nothing of His knowledge except what He wills.**”

— Qur’an 2:255

This is where every human being begins: with ignorance, not knowledge. Any knowledge we gain after that is only a gift from Allah. We do not possess knowledge by ourselves. We only know what Allah allows us to know.

Allah, the Lord of all the worlds said:

﴿ وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِي عِلْمٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴾

**“And above every possessor of knowledge is One more knowing.”**

— Qur’an 12:76

The doctor has knowledge, the scientist has knowledge, the researcher has knowledge, and the professor has knowledge—but above all of them is Allah, the All-Knowing.

Allah, the Lord of all the worlds said:

﴿ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ ۗ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴾

And they ask you (O Muhammad ﷺ) concerning the Ruh (the Spirit); Say: “The Ruh (the Spirit): it is one of the things, the knowledge of which is only with my Lord. **And of knowledge, you (mankind) have been given only a little.**”

— Qur’an 17:85

The human being should not be deceived by his limited knowledge of medicine, science, physics, chemistry, biology, or worldly causes. These are only small attempts to understand parts of Allah’s creation. The One who created the human body, life, disease, cure, causes, effects, the heavens, and the earth is the One whose knowledge is perfect and complete.

And from this angle, a **Salafi writer** — meaning, a Muslim who strives to follow Islam upon the orthodox understanding of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)’s Companions (رضي الله عنهم) and those who followed them — does not speak about worldly knowledge as if it is separate from Allah’s Lordship, His decree, His wisdom, and His perfect knowledge. Medicine, biology, chemistry, physics, causes,

disease, and cure are not viewed in a purely secular way, detached from the Creator of all things.

Rather, his Salafi way should show in how he speaks, writes, teaches, and looks at every subject. He does not treat medicine as revelation, doctors as though they cannot be mistaken, or changing human research as something beyond question. He does not blindly follow worldly knowledge, whether it comes from Muslims or non-Muslims. He benefits from it, but keeps it in its proper place.

**Shaykh Rabī' bin Hādī al-Madkhalī** (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said:

فإن الإناء ينضح بما فيه، وكل إناء بما فيه ينضح، فإذا كان سلفياً فلو دَرَسَ أي مادة  
ولو جغرافياً أو حساب؛ لرأيت المنهج السلفي -بارك الله فيك- ينضح في دروسه وفي  
جلساته وغيرها.

*“For the vessel gives out what is inside it, and every vessel gives out what it contains. So, **if he is Salafi, then even if he taught any subject – even geography or math – you would see the Salafi methodology, may Allah bless you, coming out in his lessons, in his sittings, and elsewhere.**”*

— [Tape titled: *Asbāb al-Inḥirāf wa Tawjihāt Manhajīyyah*]

So, if this is the case with geography and math, then how much more should the Salafi way appear when speaking about medicine, disease, cures, public health, fear, reliance upon Allah, human limitation, and the difference between revelation and changing worldly research? The Muslim does not reject beneficial worldly knowledge, nor does he blindly glorify it. He benefits from it with humility, while knowing that the knowledge of Allah is perfect, complete, eternal, and free from error.

**And Allah knows best.**

May Allah guide us to beneficial knowledge, protect us from arrogance and blind following, and make us humble servants who recognize the limits of human knowledge and the perfection of His knowledge.

وصلى الله وسلم على نبينا محمد، وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين. سبحانك اللهم ومحمدك، أشهد أن لا إله إلا أنت، أستغفرك وأتوب إليك.