



# Wakefield Press MEDIA RELEASE

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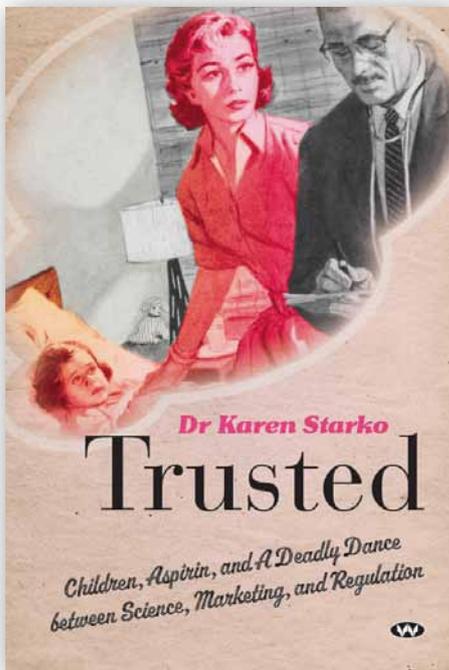
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## Trusted

### *Children, Aspirin, and a Deadly Mystery*

by Karen Starko

20 November 2022, Science / Health, RRP \$45.00, PB, ISBN 9781743059579



*Trusted* is the tale of finding the cause of Reye's syndrome, a devastating and mysterious illness described by Dr RDK Reye and colleagues at the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children, Camperdown, Sydney in 1963.

In 1978, ten-year-old Mark Keller woke up with fever, headache and a cough. His mother kept him home from school that day and a few more. He appeared to be getting better. Then, with no warning, Mark began vomiting violently and became delirious. His parents rushed him to his pediatrician's office. An ambulance was called and dispatched immediately. During the 15-minute ride to the emergency department, Mark lapsed into a coma. Within hours he was dead. Parents of baby boom, Gen X, and millennial children were terrified of the enigmatic illness. It came on suddenly in the wake of common childhood diseases and flu. Doctors were saying "nothing can be done beyond taking aspirin . . ."

Before Covid-19, before Flint, before AIDS, this deadly brain-swelling illness was striking down thousands of perfectly healthy children and was one of the first man-made public health crises in modern times. *Trusted* is a non-fiction, memoir-exposé of Karen Starko's discovery of aspirin as the cause and history of this decades-long, twentieth-century tragedy.

Karen Starko's work was met with intense skepticism and even after it was replicated again and again, politics delayed solutions every step of the way. Before her discovery, thousands of children and teens had died and tens of thousands had been hospitalized in the United States in addition to untold numbers around the world. *Trusted* exposes this nightmare: the inception, the perpetrators, the believers and disbelievers, and the unsung heroes.

**Karen Starko** is a physician, epidemiologist, and clinical trial expert who trained in internal medicine at Boston City Hospital and in infectious diseases at Brown Affiliated Hospitals and Harvard University. She was an Epidemic Intelligence Service officer in the Field Services Division of the Center for Disease, United States Public Health Service, stationed at the Arizona Department of Health Services from 1978 to 1980.