

*Panacea or Placebo?* sets out to identify just what the British public wants out of a healthcare system at the beginning of the 21st century, and what tangible qualities and conveniences they are looking for in a modern health service.

What emerges is a complex picture that combines general clarity on some issues – such as an overwhelming lack of any ideological opposition to private healthcare’s growing involvement with the NHS – with a great deal of confusion about others – for instance, whether the NHS will survive as a comprehensive and universal service.

With so much of the current health debate dominated by arguments about the features of the NHS rather than the benefits it delivers to patients, this research is a timely reminder that the public is more concerned with ends than means. There are aspects which will satisfy all of the main parties, but there is also plenty here to give each of them pause for thought. The political perils of getting NHS reform wrong remain every bit as great as the prizes for getting it right.

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PANACEA OR PLACEBO?

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PUBLIC ATTITUDES TO PRIVATE HEALTHCARE  
 AND THE FUTURE OF THE NHS

