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# **From distrust in science to pseudoscience: Psychological roots of resorting to questionable health practices**

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In an effort to preserve their health, people may rely on official medical recommendations, or turn to non-evidence based, pseudoscientific practices (from unproven traditional herbal remedies to alternative medical systems like homeopathy). These pseudoscientific practices (PSP) may be particularly appealing to people with a "high entropy" mindset, i.e. more prone to endorsing irrational beliefs, such as conspiracy theories, superstition or mutually contradictory beliefs (i.e. doublethink). These irrational beliefs may further stem from the lack of trust in the official epistemic authorities, with science being the most prominent one. Drawing from a student sample (N=270), we tested path models in which distrust in science (both general and in specific domains) predicts the use of PSP through the endorsement of irrational beliefs. General distrust in science indirectly affected the use of PSP, through all three types of irrational beliefs. Lack of trust in science of genetically modified foods predicted the use of PSP both directly, and indirectly through all three types of irrational beliefs. Lack of trust in climate science, biotechnology and nuclear energy, on the other hand, did not contribute to the prediction, indicating cultural differences in the scientific content being disputed in the media. Interventions aiming to foster better health decisions should therefore aim to build general trust in science and to challenge specific irrational beliefs.