

Review of Stuart Ritchie's book *Science Fictions*

by [Jacob Williams](#) on 2025-05-20
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This book is a good antidote to overly-rosy depictions of the scientific process ([I'm looking at you, *Starry Messenger*](#)). It gives many examples of how the incentive structure scientists work within has led to the publication of poor-quality research.

A lot of the general issues the book discusses are things I'd heard about before. One thing I hadn't heard is that misidentification of which cell lines were used in a given experiment is a widespread problem. That's surprising.

Something else I was surprised to read: Ritchie insists that misleading, overhyped summaries of scientific research can't just be blamed on journalists, because the researchers themselves are often involved in crafting the press releases.