Some Notes on Quackery - National Council Against Health Fraud But a genuine quack is someone who sells medicine for treatment while knowing that it doesn't work. The high peak of quackery was in the 1700s. Large cities like Paris and London were centers for quackery. In the United States, quackery was prevalent in the 19th century. The term 'quack' is used in reference to a person who practices medicine and dispenses advice based on observation. Quackery is a type of fraud that promotes products and services that have questionable and unproven scientific bases.