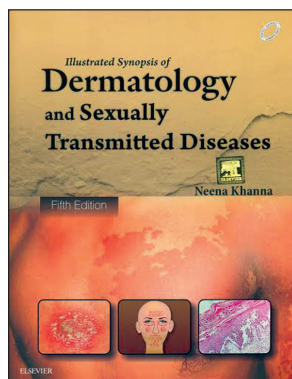


Book Reviews

Illustrated Synopsis of Dermatology and Sexually Transmitted Diseases. Fifth edition. Neena Khanna. Elsevier, New Delhi, 2016. 460 pp, ₹872. ISBN 978-81-312-4230-8.



This concise textbook provides a brief overview of the most commonly encountered dermatological diseases. The content is well organized and information is presented in an objective format. The language is easy to understand. These attributes could therefore make the book a preferred choice as a source of ready reference in a busy general practice or for students not familiar with complex dermatological nomenclature. The text is very well

illustrated with high-resolution, colour images of classical and some uncommon presentations. As the author states: 'A picture is worth a thousand words' and nowhere is this more appropriate than in dermatology. The textbook largely achieves this stated aim and will greatly aid the non-dermatologist in recognizing a skin disease and reaching the correct diagnosis. The succinct summary of the aetiology, epidemiology, clinical features including systemic involvement, course and complications, differential diagnosis, laboratory investigations and treatment will also facilitate the formulation of an initial management plan and help decide where and when to refer the patient. The other aim of the textbook is to serve as a reference source for undergraduates for whom complex terminology and a wide array of skin disorders can be bewildering.

The author presents the information in a simplified format; well emphasized with appropriate use of easy-to-follow tables, line diagrams and representative clinical images that make concepts clear. There are comprehensive tables on differential diagnoses and treatment of some commonly encountered skin diseases such as psoriasis. The book provides relevant bedside signs and tests in dermatology with clinical images. These will help students navigate their viva voce examinations. The inclusion of an appendix on structure and function of the skin; updating the chapter on treatment of skin diseases and syndromic management of sexually transmitted infections would also address a felt need of undergraduates. The aim of the author in providing a comprehensive textbook for undergraduates is therefore largely achieved.

For the next edition, more images and better use of arrows or labels to highlight primary and secondary skin lesions will add to the value of the textbook for undergraduates. The book not only provides in-depth knowledge for the dermatology trainee, it also serves as a preliminary reference in a busy clinic. Addition of a suggested reading list at the end of each chapter will be helpful for those wishing to look for more information on a particular topic.

The visual appeal with vivid illustrations and print quality is excellent for the reasonable price of the book. However, some clinical images have suboptimal resolution and the colour contrast needs attention as it is relevant in providing a clue to dermatological diagnosis.

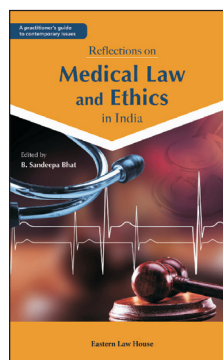
In a nutshell, the book has already elbowed its way into the bookshelves of most undergraduates being trained in dermatology

and its current improved avatar is going to ensure that it stays there. It is a two-in-one book for non-dermatologist practitioners as besides being an illustrative atlas of dermatology it provides a brief summary of how to manage most common dermatological conditions. The author deserves congratulations for this extraordinary feat of providing a book that so completely serves the needs of undergraduates and for constantly and regularly upgrading it to include current knowledge. This book is going to be around for a long time!

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Reflections on Medical Law and Ethics in India. B. Sandeepa Bhat (ed). Eastern Law House Private Ltd., Kolkata, 2016. ₹695, 297 pp. ISBN 978-81-7177-298-8.



The editor and authors of this book appear to use the term 'reflections' to mean 'serious thought or consideration'. The editor is Associate Professor of Law, Kolkata. I am not sure what to make of the additional fact provided that Bhat is also a member of the International Institute of Space Law. Bhat has two chapters in this book to his credit.

The remaining eight chapters are distributed among authors from Kolkata, Bengaluru and Thiruvananthapuram. Chapters 4 and 5 have two co-authors each. Both authors of Chapter 4 are from Bengaluru. Chapter 5 has one author from Kolkata and the other from Bengaluru.

Chapter 8 deals with medical negligence, one discussing the concept, interpretation and application in India; Chapter 9 (also dealing with malpractice) describes common errors by doctors and hospitals; Chapter 10 talks about negligence in relation to the Consumer Protection Act. As can be expected, there is some duplication in these chapters.

In the Preface, Bhat summarizes the contents of each chapter serially. These five pages are worth studying to get a sense of the general contents. Pages 17-22 provide a table of legal cases referred to in the book with references to where details can be obtained on them.

We are told in the Preface that 'this book comprises of ten scholarly articles contributed by the select few experts available in the field of medical law in India'. It would be of interest to seek the opinions of medicolegal experts in New Delhi, Mumbai,

Chennai and other centres where scores of legal luminaries work on the subject. There is no representative from the medical profession. I wonder whether medical doctors who have obtained their Legum Baccalaureus (LLB) and Master of Law (LLM) qualifications have been found wanting by the editor. I make this point as there have been respected volumes by physicians that have served generations of judges, lawyers and, of course, medical doctors and lay persons well. Off hand, I can recall the works of Drs Jaising P. Modi and Homi Shapurji Mehta.

In the introductory chapter, Ms Bismi Gopalakrishnan outlines some of the difficulties we face in enforcing the provision for health for every citizen. The Constitution of India treats health as a directive principle rather than a fundamental right. Directive principles aimed at state governments are like guidelines that lack the teeth granted under law. Besides, these principles have been scattered in diverse types of legislation and not gathered together into a compact form. Finally, while health is a state subject, laws are made by Parliament. Gopalakrishnan provides examples of how courts have tried to remedy resultant drawbacks. A reading of the far-sighted rulings can, however, be demoralizing as authorities cheerfully disregard directions handed out by the court so as to preserve *status quo ante*. A case in point is the Supreme Court ruling in 2002. It required states to provide the minimum prescribed standards mentioned in the Mental Health Act in all psychiatric and mental health institutions. A survey today may show that this ruling is honoured more in the breach than in the observance. Gopalakrishnan provides a helpful table showing major judicial decisions on health matters. After a detailed consideration of the difficulties faced by the common man, problems in seeking and obtaining justice from courts and lackadaisical attitude of governments, Gopalakrishnan suggests the creation of a National Right to Health Commission.

Unlike Gopalakrishnan, who has a demonstrated interest in laws pertaining to health, the next author, Ms Mercy Khaute has human rights as her expressed field of interest. She has written the chapter on 'Law and social order' in *Healthcare Services in India*. She reiterated the point made in the earlier chapter that since health is not a fundamental right, entitlements provided under various development programs have been skewed in favour of urban populations. Implementation of the law is haphazard. She provides the example of the Clinical Establishments Act 2010, which has, thus far, been implemented only in six states besides the Union Territories. Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and many other important states have kept this Act in abeyance without any compunction. A large part of her chapter deals with the problem of vandalism in hospitals by disgruntled patients or their families and points out that the deterrent provisions in the Prevention to Public Property Act 1984 have rarely been enforced. I found her survey of concern in parents of doctors faced with the grim reality of vandalism and hooliganism unsatisfactory. 'The survey has been carried out (on 50 parents) over informal telephonic conversations...'

Sandeepa Bhat deals with legal regulation of abortion in India (Chapter 3) and 'Euthanasia in India—is ethics in the way of law?' (Chapter 6). A search through his publications shows most of them to be on space law, remote sensing and similar topics. The introductory section to his first chapter carries an extensive but selective quotation from Mother Teresa's letter to the U.S. Supreme Court on *Roe v. Wade* without the expected quotation marks. The source referred to is secondary (*Wall Street Journal*) when the entire original letter is available online (http://groups.csail.mit.edu/mac/users/rauch/invp/roe/mothertheresa_roe.html). His chapter

provides a review of the MTP Act in India and asks some valid questions at the end.

Bhat's second chapter (euthanasia) provides a good review of the subject. Gandhiji's views are well depicted. Bringing the debate almost up to date is the discussion on Staff Nurse Aruna Shanbag's case and Ms Pinky Virani's plea to the Supreme Court. The current legal position on termination of life is clearly enunciated. In his conclusion Bhat refers to the absence of any evidence of a shift in Indian law from total reliance on the sanctity of life as a basic principle to its replacement by emphasis on the quality of life.

Chapter 4 by Sairam Bhat and Srividya Sastry discuss surrogate pregnancy. The surrogacy trade in India is valued at US\$ 2.5 billion. Surrogacy abroad and in India is reviewed. Guidelines from the Indian Council of Medical Research and the Indian National Academy of Medical Sciences are listed but, as noted above, being guidelines they can be and are flouted. The Assisted Reproductive Technology Bill (2010) is also considered. The rights of the surrogate mother are dealt with in fair detail. The authors point to an opportunity to do good that was missed by the Supreme Court of India (p. 97). They offer points that could be considered should our legislators decide to protect the rights of the surrogate mother.

Chapter 5 (Shameek Sen and Kirandeep Kaur) analyses the Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act passed in 1994 in India and compares it to similar acts in other countries and to WHO guidelines on the subject. The practice elsewhere of the state rewarding the donor of an organ is of interest. This chapter does not deal with withdrawal of life support systems in brain dead patients where organs are not to be removed for transplantation. This is dealt with in the chapter on euthanasia on pages 148–9. The conclusions derived here are based not on law but on the Indian Medical Council's regulations. Withdrawal of life support systems under other circumstances such as persistent vegetative state is dealt with in the discussion on the Supreme Court ruling in the Aruna Shanbag case in 2011.

Mahesh Menon discusses consent for procedures and forms of treatment and the role of documentation in Chapter 7. The Nuremberg trials and Code, the Declaration of Helsinki, Guidelines for biomedical research produced by Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences and other documents are discussed here. The doctor not well acquainted with legal terms will benefit from the descriptions of fiduciary relationships and those based on contract; and those of coercion, fraud and misrepresentation. The details that must be imparted to patients before obtaining consent for procedures or treatments are comprehensive (pp. 172–3 and 174). The section on documentation is to be found on pages 179–82. An error that needs correction occurs on page 175 where the author states, 'Section 87 of the Indian Penal Code states that any act done without the intention to cause death or grievous hurt ... is an offence, even if harm has resulted from it...' I presume the author intended to state that such an act is NOT an offence.

Chapter 8 on medical negligence (Aditya Kamath) defines a professional, describes the law of tort and the two key cases (*Bolam v. Friern Hospital Management Committee* and *Bolitho v. City and Hackney Health Authority*). The wealth of legal detail in this chapter may be of help to medical doctors. The next chapter (Monalisa Saha) duplicates much that is dealt with in Chapter 8. It does provide details on the laws of tort and contract, criminal law and the consumer protection law. I was surprised to see the author recommending *Practice defensive medicine as far as*

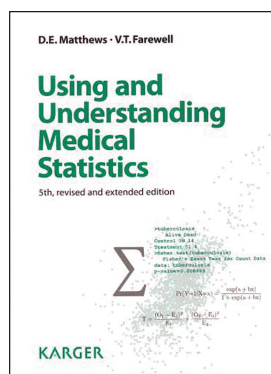
possible as the first precaution that should be taken by the doctor. Chapter 10 (Madhubanti Sandhya) is also on medical negligence and misconduct but in relation to consumer laws. The case of IMA v. V.P. Shantha is discussed in fair detail as it was the Supreme Court's decision on this case that brought doctors and medical services squarely under the Consumer Protection Act. The Bolam case and the Bolitho case are also discussed here. The footnote on page 273 needs correction. The District Forum set up under the Consumer Protection Act can only deal with complaints where the amount claimed as damages is LESS than rupees twenty lakhs. As the next sentence correctly states, for sums above twenty lakhs, the case must be brought before the state commission.

The publishers aim for a wide audience: 'medical practitioners, paramedical staff, hospital administrators, lawyers, researchers, students and the public in general.'

All in all, medical doctors and administrators will find this a helpful volume but are likely to discover that the essays included here, like the curate's egg, are good in parts. (See the cartoon titled *True Humility* drawn by George du Maurier in *Punch* on 9 November 1895.)

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Using and Understanding Medical Statistics. Fifth edition. D.E. Matthews, V.T. Farewell (eds). Karger, 2015. 338 pp, price not mentioned. ISBN 978-3-318-05458-3.



First published nearly 30 years ago, this book has considerably improved with successive revisions over five editions. The present edition has new topics such as Q-Q plot, funnel plot, zero-inflated Poisson regression, and some new examples. These additions supplement the medical orientation of the text that otherwise is abundantly evident with chapters on designs of clinical trials, meta-analysis, epidemiological applications (including a small section on clinical epidemiology), diagnostic tests, and agree-

ment and reliability. The core statistical topics such as analysis of contingency tables, tests of significance, analysis of normally distributed data, linear regression and logistic regression, analysis of variance, and the burning topic of sample size are also included.

I am impressed with three chapters devoted to survival analysis: the first is on the Kaplan–Meier method, the second is on the log-rank test and the third on proportional hazards regression. The size of the chapters has been deliberately kept small (10–15 pages) for a 'single evening's reading', which might be an inducement for some readers. However, in the process, continuity and coherence

required for such a text have suffered. I felt unsatisfied after reading a chapter as if I have been left in the middle.

Although the authors target medical researchers, and indeed much of the mathematical aspects have been kept at a minimum, I did not find the contents sufficiently engaging. As admitted by the authors, this text is for a 'motivated reader who is willing to invest a little time and effort in understanding statistical methods', which in a way expresses the limitation of this book. It does not motivate but takes motivation for granted. I wish there are many readers who meet this expectation, but my experience suggests that not many medical researchers are motivated and they need to be persuaded to this upcoming 'sexiest' science that helps to draw valid and reliable conclusions from disparate empirical data afflicted with uncertainties. In my opinion, omnipresent medical uncertainties can be a forceful portal to motivate medical researchers to learn and apply statistical methods to their research endeavours—that is missing in this text. The motivated medical researchers that this book targets would find R codes at the end of each chapter useful in applying these methods.

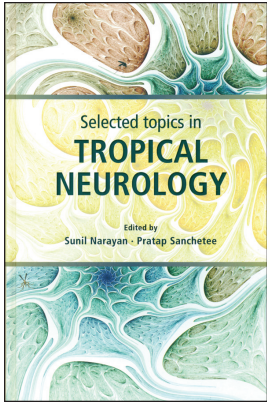
The chapter on data analysis is extremely useful for the target audience, and it may be better to expand this chapter to incorporate more on ensuring reliability and validity of data. Whereas most chapters are synchronized, Chapter 16 (of 23 chapters) is pushed back too much and may have been better placed upfront. In fact, the questions answered in this chapter are among the most important ones that a medical researcher should be interested in learning right in the beginning. No amount of meticulous analysis can yield useful results unless the data meet quality standards, and I wish that medical researchers are made aware of this requirement early in their statistical learning. Also, discussing random effects models before analysis of variance looked like B before A until noting that this is for binary outcomes under logistic regression. The conventional use of random effects is for quantitative outcomes. Absence of this is not surprising as the book is an introductory text and not an advanced treatise; however, discussing it for binary and not for continuous data is intriguing. At the same time, there is a section on zero-inflated Poisson regression, which is an advanced topic for the intended audience. Incidentally, there is a mention of 'continuous distribution for positive observations' in this section that seems to refer to discrete data in the context of Poisson model. Occasional errors of this type are common in many books on statistics for medical professionals and I would not worry too much about them.

I would have liked to have a chapter on statistical fallacies so as to alert research workers on what can go wrong, advertently or inadvertently, and how to critically examine the results reported by others in this discipline with the ever-increasing number of journals.

Overall, the book is well-written, the methods are illustrated with examples as required for this kind of text, but the explanations are rather brief. The format of the book is attractive, figures are clear and properly annotated, and the text readable. The book succeeds in providing an introductory exposure of statistical methods to the motivated medical researchers but does not try to motivate them.

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Tropical Neurology. Sunil Narayan, Pratap Sanchettee (eds). Byword Books, New Delhi, 2015. 284 pp, price not mentioned. ISBN 978–81–8193–117–7.



‘Tropical neurology’ and its parent, ‘tropical medicine’ are both anachronisms. They date back to the times of the non-aligned movement, Nirula ice-cream, etc. I have yet to meet someone who calls herself or himself a tropical neurologist, unlike stroke neurologist, epileptologist, neuroepidemiologist and such like. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the first generation of neurologists who had trained abroad returned to India and encountered conditions that were not well described in the literature of the day. These largely consisted of

infectious disorders, but also included conditions caused by neurotoxins and genetic illnesses. Superb clinical descriptions translated into classic papers that informed us of much of what we learnt in neurology in the 1980s to 1990s. However, the genre is now rather passé. A good deal of what was known as ‘tropical’ disease is now subsumed in infectious disease and travel medicine. Personally, ‘tropical’ had unsavoury connotations for me, reminiscent of colonial, poor and south/underdeveloped, and it carried rather a patronizing whiff of ‘the white man’s burden’. As expected, the last outposts of tropical medicine and neurology now reside in a small island off the west coast of Europe and in the Indian subcontinent. Here, the subject has considerable standing. An annual conference is held on it and it has the status of a subspecialty in the Indian Academy of Neurology.

This handsome little volume contains the edited proceedings of a conference on tropical neurology, held in Puducherry in 2010. Getting diverse authors from different streams to stay on message is always a challenging task and Kurupath Radhakrishnan puts it best in one of the three forewords: ‘... some of the chapters are concise and focused, others are elaborate and unfocused’.

Five infectious disorders make up about 40% of the book. The chapter on neurocysticercosis is largely devoted to serological diagnosis, which has been rendered clinically irrelevant with advances in neuroimaging. The chapter on epidemic viral encephalitis among children by Nagabhushana Rao is a massive, 50-page exposition of a lifetime’s experience. It may have been the target of the second half of Dr Radhakrishnan’s comment but it has enough useful nuggets to reward the reader for a careful perusal. The three other chapters—on neurobrucellosis, tuberculous meningitis and cerebral malaria—are concise, state-of-the-art reviews.

Environmental toxins affecting the nervous system were another pet trope of tropical neurology. Suicidal ingestion of pesticides, especially organophosphates, is a public health problem. Dr N.H. Wadia provides a comprehensive but succinct review of the Pune experience of managing large numbers of such patients in a public hospital. Dr Raja Reddy’s article on endemic skeletal fluorosis ends with a call to action on a preventable public health issue. Neurotoxic snake bites are the subject of a short academic review by faculty members of the host institution. What is missing from this book is a discussion of heavy metals and the contribution of unregulated Ayurvedic treatments. The wider dimensions of rural and agricultural occupational exposure to neurotoxins and their links to both depression and parkinsonism also need exploration.

Craniovertebral junction anomalies were one of the focuses of attention of Dr Wadia, the founder of the ‘Sir JJ’ Department of Neurology where I trained. Since then, this topic has made an appearance in every compendium of tropical neurology. Professor Sarat Chandra of the All India Institute Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi is the lead author of an ambitiously titled (Management of bony CV junction anomalies: Past, present, future) but tantalizingly short review with a neurosurgical focus. I look forward to a comprehensive, magisterial overview of the topic from this unit. Dr Wadia’s legacy in Indian neurology has been brought uptodate with an Indian perspective on common inherited cerebellar ataxias by authors also from AIIMS. This chapter starts with the clinical and molecular genetic classification of these disorders and provides a short review of Indian families with these disorders. Another rather short chapter examines specifically Indian aspects of the management of Wilson disease. This chapter is preceded by accounts of drug-resistant epilepsy and the gender-specific problems of epilepsy in women.

The last chapter is probably the most relevant and brings this book into the twenty-first century. Sunil Narayan explores the ways in which epigenetics modifies the geographically specific phenotypic expression of common neurological illnesses. Some of these links are now becoming apparent in psychiatric illnesses, epilepsy and neurodegenerative disorders. Indian neurologists are used to a specifically Indian flavour in almost all the conditions that they treat, not just in the diseases traditionally called ‘tropical’. Is it now time to junk the term ‘tropical neurology’? Why not South Asian neurology instead?

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