

**What's in the Syringe? Principles of early integrated palliative care.** Jennifer Temel, Joseph Greer, Juliet Jacobsen, Vicki Jackson. Oxford University Press, Oxford. 192pp, ₹3670. ISBN978-019-7525-173.



This is a comprehensive and insightful guide that explores the critical principles of early integrated palliative care. Written by a group of experts in the field, it offers a detailed analysis of the crucial elements that go into providing good palliative care and emphasizes the need for early integration and multidisciplinary cooperation. We highlight the book's accomplishments in clarifying the fundamentals of palliative care,

its applicability to the current state of healthcare, and a few places where it may be improved.

The authors delve into the complex world of palliative care, demystifying its foundations and highlighting its crucial role in enhancing the quality of life for patients with severe conditions. To provide readers a rich tapestry of knowledge that is both instructional and thought-provoking, the book deftly blends theoretical understandings with practical tactics.

Dr Juliet Jacobsen, an interventionalist for the Cancer Outcomes Research Team's palliative care studies, contributed to defining early integrated palliative care. Dr Jackson, a Palliative Care physician, developed the theoretical basis for the early integrated palliative care model. Dr Greer, a Clinical Psychologist, has worked to evaluate the impact of the early integrated palliative care model on outcomes for patients with advanced lung cancer. Dr Temel pioneered outpatient palliative care for advanced lung cancer patients, integrating it with oncology care.

The book's unrelenting dedication to understanding the complexities of early integrated palliative care is one of its most remarkable features. The writers skilfully lead readers through various components of palliative care, showing how it goes beyond pain relief to consider a patient's emotional, social and spiritual well-being. The chapters on communication and shared decision-making stand out in particular because they lay a strong emphasis on the necessity of genuine and open communication between medical professionals, patients and their families.

The book's emphasis on cross-disciplinary collaboration is another feature. It highlights how a comprehensive approach integrating expertise from the medical, nursing, psychiatric and spiritual sectors may improve a patient's experience and lessen suffering. The inclusion of relevant case studies and practical examples helps to bridge the gap between theory and practice and broadens the book's utility.

When the global healthcare environment is rapidly changing, putting an emphasis on early integrated palliative care is relevant and essential. As the population ages and chronic illnesses increase in prevalence, a holistic approach to patient care is important. This book equips healthcare professionals, educators and students with the information and tools they require to confront these issues head-on and promote a paradigm change that is patient-centred.

Although there are a few places where it may be reinforced, the book does a great job of laying out the principles of palliative care. Given the variety of patient groups seen in today's healthcare settings, further study on cultural competency (ability

of healthcare providers to understand, respect and effectively navigate the cultural beliefs, practices and preferences of diverse patient populations) and its function in the provision of palliative care may be beneficial. It ensures that care is tailored to an individual's cultural background, enhancing communication and patient outcomes. Additionally, readers may gain insight into the future of patient assistance via the introduction of cutting-edge technical developments and their integration into palliative care (integration of telehealth platforms that enable patients and families to access consultations, support and symptom management remotely). For example, virtual reality systems might be used to provide immersive experiences that promote relaxation and pain relief for patients receiving palliative care at home.

The book's analysis of challenging topics might also gain depth through a more complete consideration of the ethical concerns surrounding palliative care, such as advance care planning and end-of-life decision-making. Finally, a deeper analysis of the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing early integrated palliative care in various healthcare systems across the world will offer a broader perspective.

This book is a useful resource for demystifying the complicated world of palliative care. Due to its thorough investigation of fundamental concepts, commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration, and applicability in contemporary healthcare, it makes a noteworthy contribution to the literature. With a few additions to address cultural competence, technological advancements, ethical considerations and global perspectives, the book has the potential to become an even more important resource for healthcare professionals dedicated to improving the well-being of patients dealing with serious illnesses.

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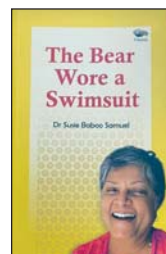
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**The Bear Wore a Swimsuit.** Susie Baboo Samuel. Vitasta Publishing Private Limited, New Delhi, 2023. 262pp, ₹495. ISBN 13-978-81-9633-2983.



This memoir by Dr Susie Baboo Samuel is a charming autobiographical narrative of the tapestry of her experiences with family, friends, patients and colleagues. Crafted with love, empathy and humour, the tale takes us from traditional Kerala and Tamil Nadu, to multicultural Singapore, across the mountainous terrain of Bhutan and Nepal, and back.

As the prologue states, this was a story that almost never happened. The author's father was presumed dead shortly after his marriage, during the Japanese occupation of Singapore in the midst of the Second World War. When he returned to India many weary and incommunicado years later, nobody recognized him. Dr Susie's mother had long presumed that she was a war widow. It was only their elderly canine pet who instantly recognized his master. His return led to a fairy tale ending to a cruel separation, and the beginning of Dr Susie's life.

Part one of the book describes her grandparents, parents and her time with them in villages in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Her mother, the fifth of nineteen siblings, belonged to the class of 1925, of the LMP (Licentiate in Medical Practice) course, at Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore. Subsequently, she completed MBBS at the Madras Medical College in Chennai (erstwhile Madras). Dr Susie's father became a priest, and was posted at churches in several villages in Tamil Nadu. Dr Susie's vacations with her grandparents along with her cousins are described in delightful detail. The matriarch ran the household with a firm, but loving hand. Rules were clear, excuses were not accepted. A little fed a lot of people, and nobody went hungry. Toilet training took on a whole new meaning with a makeshift booth and a pit in the field. Mandatory music by the occupant of the toilet warned others away while it was in use. The warm fold of the extended family in their ancestral home gave the siblings and cousins cherished memories.

In part two, Dr Susie describes her life in Singapore, after her father accepted an assignment to be pastor for the Tamil congregation at Singapore. The Christ Church congregation, where her father was vicar, became Dr Susie's extended family during her growing years. Part three describes the retirement and relocation of Dr Susie's parents to Madras (now Chennai), the honorary services provided by her father to anyone requesting priestly help, and the indelible loss when her parents passed.

Part four details the author's education and medical training. After schooling at St Margaret's in Singapore, Dr Susie was admitted to the pre-university course at Stella Maris College in Madras. It was taken for granted that she would become a doctor. Her parents hoped that she would make it to CMC, Vellore, and she did, joining the batch of 1964. The initial introductory days with seniors included a trip to the mortuary for the ritual scare—a senior masquerading as a dead body, and a final dunking in the lily pond. A warm welcome to the fraternity of the women's hostel followed. Delightful prose describes experiences and escapades as a medical student through preclinical and clinical years, followed by internship. Delivering a baby girl with a perfect Apgar score on a moving train as a fresh graduate was testament to her competence.

Part five chronicles her wedding to N.M. Samuel, her batchmate from CMC, Vellore, the birth of their children, Rekha and Anish, the assortment of animals that shared their homes in various parts of the world, and their years of training in the UK.

Part six details Dr Susie's work in India, Bhutan and Nepal, with The Leprosy Mission. After initial work in the leprosy hospital at Karigiri, immediately after internship, Drs Susie and Samuel joined the Gidakom Leprosy Hospital, a few mountain peaks away from Thimphu, far away from civilization, but surrounded by natural beauty. Dedicated services with minimal resources earned them the love and gratitude of the local populace. Not only did they treat leprosy patients, they also provided emergency medical, surgical and obstetric care, given that there was no other healthcare facility in that area. After their stint in Bhutan, postgraduate studies followed in CMC, Vellore and the UK. As fresh postgraduates, they were posted at the Anandban Leprosy Hospital in Nepal, on the outskirts of Kathmandu. Dr Susie trained in reconstructive surgery at the Naini Leprosy Hospital near Allahabad, so that she could help leprosy patients with deformities. Soon she was doing tendon transfers, amputations and cosmetic surgeries on leprosy patients, to help them improve their quality of life. Since general hospitals turned away leprosy patients even if they had other ailments, Drs Susie and Samuel also cared for the general medical and surgical needs of their patients. Healthcare was not easily accessible in the region, and Dr Susie was often called to provide obstetric care in isolated villages in mountainous terrain. Some of those trips were nothing short of heroic.

The title of the book is a story in itself. As the only child of elderly parents, the author was shielded from what was perceived to be the dangerous sport of swimming. Her courageous effort to start swimming in her sixties forms the backdrop of the title. An entire life of love, laughter, challenges and service have been described in 262 pages. Unapologetic humour, and unfiltered empathy make this book a delightful read. The book is available on Amazon for ₹495. The author pledges royalties from the sale of the book to The Banyan, an organization based in Chennai, working towards providing mental healthcare and social services to homeless women.

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