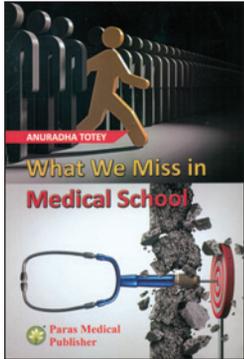


Book Reviews

What We Miss in Medical School. Anuradha Totey. Paras Medical Publisher, Hyderabad, 2018. 212pp, ₹ 195. ISBN 978–81–8191–486–6.



You would expect from the title of this book to read a discourse on the good things in life that we missed out in medical school, being cooped up in secluded environments among serious mates whose only variety in life and entertainment is referring to new medical tomes, while the world outside moves on with its social life and a liberal helping of fun. Disappointment! This book is instead one more serious volume that tells us what should be added to our medical curriculum to

prepare us for the complex world outside.

Anuradha Totey is a Diplomate of the National Board in Ophthalmology; she then went on to complete her MBA in human resources. She became the first woman trainer to get a 5-star status for Joint Commission International official courses, and is a director of Master Creators. She thus introduces herself (in that order) as an international life coach, a motivational speaker and an ophthalmologist. In the former capacities, she has rendered her services to various organizations, in academic and corporate circles, mainly in the Asia-Pacific region. This concise book is a result of demands on life skills for doctors.

This 14-chapter book can be broadly divided into sections that cover dealing with oneself (tap your potentials, set your goals, branding and marketing, reaching the zenith, time management and financial management), with patients (doctor–patient relationship, communication skills and violence against doctors), with fellow doctor and other colleagues and with the society at large (medicolegal issues and hospital management). The chapters are, of course, intermingled, and some are written by guest contributors.

The language is simple, almost conversational English and straight from the heart. There is no attempt to impress with deep philosophy and heavy vocabulary. Instead, in places, it appears the gentle author wants to hold the reader by the hand and lead. Messages are given in points with expansion, and there is liberal use of simple charts, cartoons, image fillers and acronyms. Being a pocket-sized edition and with medium-sized well-spaced fonts, it is easy to rush through the pages. Each chapter ends with a summary and an exercise questionnaire that encourages the reader to sit through as in a workshop. In fact, the author almost seems to plead with the reader to pay attention. What is appreciable is the author's passion about her mission.

The difficulty is where to position this book. It is obviously not for the seasoned professional—the advices come too late (maybe it is never too late). Is it for the authorities who set the medical curriculum? The scope is too wide to incorporate into a tight medical scholastic calendar. Is it for the graduate just getting out of medical school, embarking on a career? Maybe the book will act as a primer, encouraging the youngster to get the points together and search elsewhere for detailed guidance. But, most of all, it is full of the stuff workshops are designed around (not

surprising, considering the author's forte). Yes, that is the niche the book best fills.

In an attempt to keep it brief but comprehensive, the author understandably leaves out much of the detail. But, each topic, or combinations of topics, mentioned here could be the subject of workshops that can intersperse the year's schedules—a gainful break from medical texts and journals to get an insight into the world outside. The chapters provide a skeleton on which to build. That brings us full circle: a book written by an author who conducts workshops on life skills that we did not learn, and did not know we missed in medical school, and that forms the framework for such workshops. Logical.

PS: A polite note to the publisher: give a copy editor access to the text before the next edition goes to print.

PHILIP ABRAHAM

Room No. 1104, Clinic Building

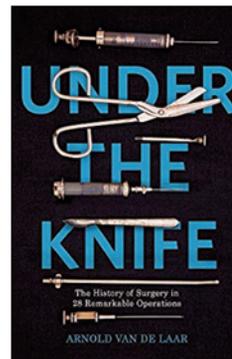
P.D. Hinduja Hospital and M.R.C. and Hinduja Healthcare

Mumbai

Maharashtra

dr_pabraham@hindujahospital.com

Under the Knife: The history of surgery in 28 remarkable operations. Arnold van de Laar. John Murray, London, 2018. 357pp, ₹ 1260. ISBN 9781250200105 (HB), 9781250200099 (eBook).



A considerable amount of ground on the history of surgery has been covered in the introduction itself. Towards the end of the introduction, the author introduces us to the persona of the average surgeon who conceals his doubts behind an air of self-confidence. When—as happens rarely—his patient dies after surgery, the surgeon's morale is shattered but the spirit encapsulated in the title of the song by the British rock band Queen, 'the show must go on', also brings back a degree of equanimity as the surgeon braces himself to see his next patient.

As the title suggests, there are 28 chapters, each describing a landmark operation. We are reminded of Ambroise Paré's discovery in the 16th century that the traditional method for treating bleeding wounds on the battlefield by pouring boiling oil into them was unnecessarily painful and less effective than a salve made of eggs, oil of roses and turpentine. The author calls it the first step towards modern surgery.

In turn, the origin of the words *surgery* (from the Greek term for the hand) and *chirurgeons*, its practitioners (*kheir*: hand; *ergon*: work) is explained. The knife became part of the surgeon's equipment once the principle *ubi pus, ibi evacua* (where there is