

# Book review

## *In turn: Every junior doctor must do their time*

**Author: HG Royster**

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This debut novel by a recent medical graduate tells a fictionalised story about life as a junior doctor in Australian hospitals. By fictionalised, the author means that this is not her personal story but a

combination of observations and the experiences of others in several hospitals, although with artistic licence wrapped around events and timelines created by the author.

In the tradition of books by junior doctors, many humorous moments are described around early experiences with patients and colleagues; however, the transition from student to worker can be challenging and so much of the humour is rather noir. At times, the book is an uncomfortable read that provokes reflection on the role of medical education in easing this transition. So much effort goes into preparing medical students for graduation and, later, in post-intern and specialty training, that we expect the pathways through this long process to be 'joined up' and supported. Instead, the gap between graduate outcomes and workplace expectations might be wider than we think. Hospitals are hierarchical, frenetic workplaces that provide both excitement and distress. Imposter phenomenon is relatively common, with some studies showing it might affect perhaps one-third of junior doctors.<sup>1</sup>

Even accepting that the events are more than one person could experience in a single year, the apparent normalisation of distress is concerning. Adjustment to working life might require more support than is currently provided.

My own junior hospital years were not like this. I worked too hard and slept too little but gained a lot of clinical experience and mentorship from more senior people who were interested in helping me develop. How have things changed since then?

The book is well-written, very readable and the main characters feel 'real' – I feel as if I have met all of them – as do the descriptions of joy and despair. I enjoyed the concepts of 'baby terns' and 'medcest'.

I recommend this book to all involved in medical education as a good read that might help us understand, prepare for and support this important stage of personal and professional development.

### Author

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### Reference

1. Chodoff A, Conyers L, Wright S, Levine R. "I never should have been a doctor": A qualitative study of imposter phenomenon among internal medicine residents. *BMC Med Educ* 2023;23(1):57. doi: 10.1186/s12909-022-03982-8.

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