

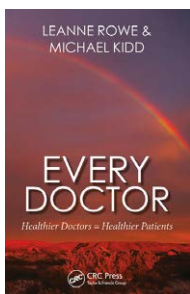
Book reviews

Every doctor: Healthier doctor = healthier patients

Authors: Leanne Rowe, Michael Kidd

Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2019

Paperback ISBN 9781138497856



Every doctor is a masterpiece that explores the critical goal of physician self-care while delivering clinical care of the highest standard to others. As highlighted by the authors, ‘there are

immense challenges facing the 21st-century doctor – stress, burnout, mental illness, suicide, substance abuse, bullying, harassment, discrimination, patient-initiated anger and violence, and medical litigation’. Physician self-care therefore remains pivotal to transcend these common stressors, build personal resilience and ‘create our legacy’.

The book is separated into three sections, each highlighting key recommendations. Section 1 presents personal and poignant reflections by medical professionals with diverse clinical experience from a myriad of specialties about strategies to improve physical and mental health. It acknowledges the genuine hardships faced by doctors every day; the predicament experienced by clinicians to express these challenges, including fear of judgement by colleagues and shame due to public humiliation; and the personal sacrifices made by medical professionals, which tragically continue to be celebrated as a badge of honour. Section 2 provides strategies to create healthier teams, ‘the essential ingredients

of strong collaborative clinical leadership and culture’. It highlights the intolerant and toxic culture of medicine, in which disclosure of doctor distress results in ‘career suicide’. The pressure on doctors to deliver more for their patients under time pressure and personal stressors with limited coping mechanisms inevitably leads to impoverished patient outcomes. As a corollary, it also affects the health of clinicians and limits their ability to take on leadership roles in addition to clinical roles, essential elements to the success of an aspiring clinician. Finally, Section 3 provides an affirmation for every doctor to lead by example and influence positive changes in their workplace every day. Section 3 includes acknowledging collaborative medical leadership and living our shared values exemplified by the Hippocratic Oath, which unifies all medical professionals.

Building strong relationships, communicating effectively, prioritising our own physical and mental health and contributing to a shared legacy where we develop realistic goals for all aspects of our lives beyond medicine are just some strategies articulated by Rowe and Kidd in their elegant analysis. They present practical strategies based on medical literature and the wisdom of experienced doctors, and they employ storytelling as a strategy to educate medical professionals about the importance of self-care. I recommend this book as an effective and informative guide for physicians to succeed in their personal and professional endeavours.

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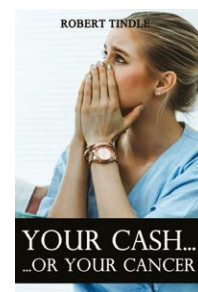
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Your cash or your cancer

Author: Robert Tindle

Jacobs Well, Qld: Ocean Reeve Publishing, 2022

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As general practitioners (GPs) we regularly work with our patients as they navigate the healthcare system. However, for one group of our patients – those with rare diseases – the cracks in the pathway are often wider than the stepping stones. Paradoxically, although a GP may only have one patient with a particular rare disease per career, there are so many rare diseases that most GPs have many such patients, reflective of the approximately 8% of the population who live with a rare disease.¹ The strong professional relationships that develop between GPs and their patients are a cornerstone of wellbeing for those with rare diseases.²

Professor Tindle explores the challenges that those with rare cancers face in obtaining the latest in cancer therapy, immune checkpoint inhibitor (ICI) medications. Although these medications are available for many cancers, they are only funded by government access schemes for common cancers.

This book explores the lives of people whose cancers are not sufficiently common to warrant government funding for ICIs. The only effective option is usually self-funding, which is not for the faint-hearted as the cost per course is in the tens of thousands of dollars, paid upfront before each dose. In keeping with

the movement to explore clinical medicine from a patient rather than practitioner or disease perspective,³ the text is a fictionalised account of people and their families whose lives become interwoven through their connection to ICIs.

The most recent *Health of the nation* report published by The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners notes that patient access to healthcare is the number one health system issue.⁴ Patient discussions are most effective when everyone is best informed of the issues. I recommend this book as an insightful background to the specific moral, ethical, legal and financial challenges when bringing new life-saving treatments to the community, information that will assist in managing your patients affected by these challenges.

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