

Narrative in health care

Healing patients, practitioners, profession, and community

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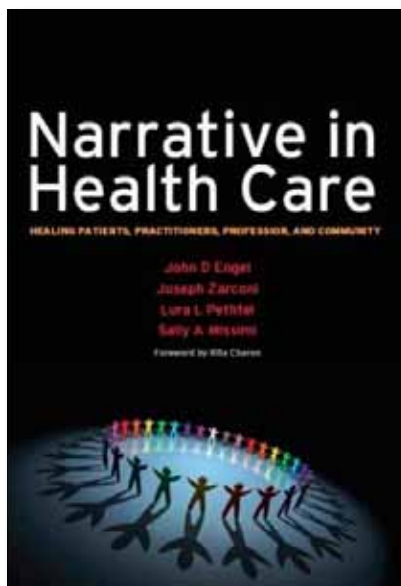
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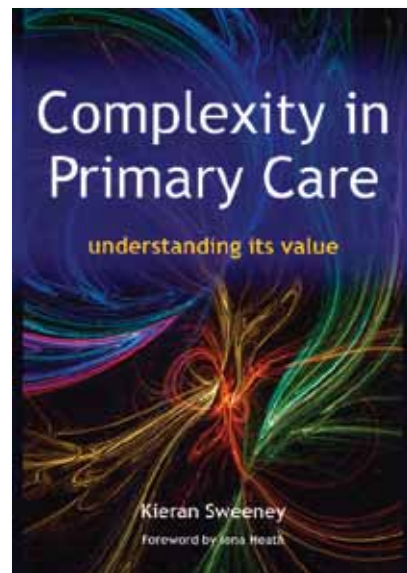
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effectively demonstrate a narrative method for imparting knowledge and skill. This book is filled with pearls ready to be harvested by any reader.

—Gail R. Greenberg MSW

Ms Greenberg is a social worker and holds a faculty appointment in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan in Regina.



Complexity in primary care

Understanding its value

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OVERALL RATING Good

STRENGTHS Thought provoking, organized, intelligent

WEAKNESSES Complex language

AUDIENCE General practitioners, health care organizations, and policy makers

OVERALL RATING Excellent

STRENGTHS A comprehensive and engaging introduction to narrative health care

WEAKNESSES The language is periodically esoteric and the level of abstraction complex

AUDIENCE Physicians interested in practising narrative health care, medical teachers, and medical students

Narrative in Health Care is a book to be read when embarking on a journey toward practising narrative health care. It will appeal to new and experienced practitioners, abstract thinkers as well as those more practice-oriented, health care providers, and teachers. Anyone interested in understanding the nuances and complexities of narrative in health care and teaching will appreciate this addition to the body of literature on the subject. Its scope is ambitious, and it delivers. The only drawback is the language can at times be dense and esoteric, which reduces one's ability to readily grasp the take-home message.

This book is written collaboratively by members of different health

care disciplines and draws upon their diverse strengths. The layout employs a template that renders its content accessible to those who read cover to cover as well as the more time-restricted readers. Although their reach is large, the authors are successful in covering a fair amount of ground. Those who are new to narrative health care will walk away from this book having had an opportunity to think and learn about its historical context, philosophical underpinnings, theoretical foundations, and related practical skills. Teachers can engage in introspective discussion on the essence of caring for patients with their medical students, and reflect on the kinds of conversations one might have with learners on topics of illness, healing, and the struggle for altruism in the face of the current societal landscape.

Narrative in Health Care is a compassionate and thoughtful book as well as a tome on caring for and nurturing those affected by disease and illness. The creative uses of narrative throughout the book are plentiful, illustrating the diverse ways narrative can be used in teaching and learning. Through the inclusion of stories, poems, and prose, the authors

This book deals with health care models that influence the provision of primary care. My first impression of this book was one of intimidation at the unfamiliar language and concepts used to describe these models. The author, however, reviews each model then adds clinical commentary to enhance the understanding of the concepts discussed. He also reaffirms the features of each model during the discussions to facilitate understanding.

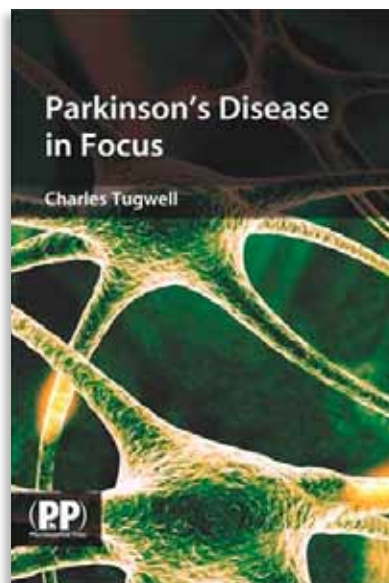
This book is divided into chapters, each reviewing the different models that have contributed to the evolution of the current understanding of the practice of medicine. The first chapter questions why it is important to understand how physicians think in order to make decisions in clinical practice. In the subsequent 3 chapters, the author outlines the historical development of the scientific models that determine our current decision-making processes in medicine. Once the foundations of the current models have been discussed, the author uses the next 2 chapters to discuss an enhanced model in health care—that of complexity. He reviews the mathematical theories involved in the understanding of complex systems and differentiates complexity from chaos. Throughout the presentation of the facets of the model, there are clinical examples to illustrate the components of the theory. In the final chapter the author reviews the principles of complexity in relation to 4 of his published articles. I found this section of the text difficult to relate to the previously described principles in the book. However, there is an extensive reference and reading list included in the book and an index to access text easily.

Overall, I thought the author put forth an intriguing, thought-provoking account of the different models of care that underlie current medical practice. His illustration of the model

of complexity in medicine further advances understanding of the doctor-patient relationship and ultimately the principles that guide health care policy.

—Cindy L. Marshall MD

Dr Marshall is a family physician in Nova Scotia.



Parkinson's disease in focus

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OVERALL RATING Excellent

STRENGTHS Easy to read,
useful figures and illustrations,
well organized

WEAKNESSES None

AUDIENCE Physicians and
pharmacists

Our understanding of Parkinson disease changes periodically. New discoveries are constantly being published in the medical

literature, not only on clinical aspects of the disease but also regarding treatments. These treatments include pharmacotherapy and nondrug therapies, such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, surgery, and complementary and alternative practices. For clinicians, up-to-date information is often required; this book is timely and offers all that is required to catch up on these aspects of Parkinson disease. The disease is covered from basic science to clinical concepts (ie, identification, evaluation, and treatment).

The author is a highly qualified pharmacist in neurology in London, England. His book begins with descriptions of clinical aspects of Parkinson disease (ie, signs and symptoms, pathophysiology, etiology, diagnosis, and investigations) and is followed by chapters on known therapeutic approaches. The chapters are short and readable. The book is enriched by pictures and figures that very elegantly illustrate an already very well-written text. Clinical guidelines are nicely presented at the end of the book. Useful appendices that summarize drug side effects and interactions can be found at the end.

Parkinson's Disease in Focus is easy to read and its content is readily accessible. The information is straightforward—after reading this book, health professionals will have the impression they are well informed about Parkinson disease. They will certainly be more equipped to encounter patients with the disease. As future literature on the subject is published and new notions acquired, it will become easier for any reader to build upon the information provided by this work. It is a book of value for both medical doctors and pharmacists, and it is certainly one of the best overviews available at this time.

—Pierre Arsenault MD PhD

Dr Arsenault is an Associate Professor in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Sherbrooke in Quebec.