



## The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association

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### **in-Training: Stories From Tomorrow's Physicians**

by Ajay Major and Aleena Paul (eds).  
Pager Publications, Inc; 2016.  
372 pp. ISBN: 978-0692658635.

In an effort to present the challenges of being a physician-in-training and promote humanism in medicine, the in-Training.org staff teamed up with an advisory group established by the Gold Foundation to publish the book *in-Training: Stories From Tomorrow's Physicians*. This book provides a remarkable collection of more than 100 narratives sorted into themes such as anatomy classes, clerkships, student burnout, patient interactions, and dealing with death and dying. The book's strength lies within the essays, which give student readers and contributors the opportunity to think and express themselves in a creative way. The questions at the end of each essay, on the other hand, may be seen as both a strength and weakness in the collection. One may find that while many of these questions initiate serious reflective insight, a number of questions are written simply to reiterate an author's viewpoint without asking the reader to ponder much further.

The collection is an effective attempt to carefully examine the value of the

humanities in health care and the challenges that medical students face to maintain humanism during their undergraduate medical training. It becomes very engaging for a budding physician to discover that he or she can relate to the seemingly trivial moments as well as the unforgettably macabre experiences that many students face throughout their preclinical years. Although physicians who have been in practice for many years may find this book a bit naive, it can serve as a recollection of similar emotions they had during training, or it may help them understand the distinct challenges and experiences that the current generation of medical students is facing.

Although the book features a diverse assembly of medical student voices, many alternative viewpoints are still absent. The anthology could be strengthened if the editors sought additional perspectives on issues brought up in certain chapters, such as racial discrimination, international medical trips, or palliative care in the hospital. Nevertheless, with more than 300 pages of heart-felt stories, poems, and prose, the editors did an exemplary job of compiling a well-rounded variety of relatable experiences.

The book has multiple styles; the essays vary in tone and length, making it difficult to read in one sitting but enjoy-

able in small bites. Still, some authors who contributed a number of essays stand out. Jennifer Tsai, for example, puts her feelings into memorable words. Her lament that "cells are not people and science is not healthcare" and her argument for a broader view of what medicine is capable of stimulate thought and highlight a writer with a bright future. Ajay Koti, another notable student who authored several essays, bravely calls physicians and student doctors "wounded healers" when referencing the primary issues of burnout in the medical profession: physician/student depression and suicide.

*in-Training: Stories From Tomorrow's Physicians* does an outstanding job of creating a space for medical students to express their emotions and reflect on their experiences. Each essay was carefully selected, and the editors provide reflective tools to assist students and readers in their goal of encouraging humanistic medicine. This collection is a step toward further empowering the medical student's voice. (doi:10.7556/jaoa.2017.047)

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