

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Medical mysteries: the testament of a clinical scientist. John Dickinson. Book Guild, pp 505, £15.95. ISBN 1 85776 976 7
Reviewed by Panja A in *BMJ* 2006; 332:184

The book covers 42 subjects, each related to a condition not fully understood, thereby making it a medical mystery. The book carefully balances anecdotes with evidence.

Global health leadership and management. Editors: William H Foegen, Nils Daulaire, Robert E Black, Clarence E Pearson. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, pp 241, 2005. \$47. ISBN 0-7879-7153-7. Reviewed by MacWilliams KE in *N Eng J Med* 2006; 353:2825-2826.

This collection of essays written by prominent persons in international public health focuses on "Bridging the huge gap between the knowledge of medical science and the delivery of public health".

Can we say no? The challenge of rationing health care. Henry J Aaron and William B Schwartz, with Melissa A Cox. Brookings Institution Press, Washington DC, pp 199, 2005. \$44.95 (cloth), \$18.95 (paper). ISBN 0-8157-0120-9 (cloth), 0-8157-0121-7 (paper). Reviewed by Keeler E in *N Eng J Med* 2006; 354: 1327-1328.

The authors compare the American health care system with the British National Health Service and describe the changes that must occur in the US to control the rising health care costs.

Catharsis: on the art of medicine. Andrzej Szczeklik. Translated by Antonia Lloyd-Jones. Foreword by Czeslaw Milosz. The University of Chicago Press, pp 172, 2005. \$20. ISBN 0-226-78869-5. Reviewed by Tallis R in *The Lancet* 2006; 367(9517): 1135-1136

Pre-scientific medicine was horrific and ineffective. However, with the domination of evidence-based medicine we have lost the deeper, spiritual meaning in medicine. The author tries to capture this meaning through Greek and Roman myths of the origin of medicine and their relevance today.

Choosing children: the ethical dilemmas of genetic intervention. Jonathan Glover. Oxford University Press, pp 120, 2006. £9.99. ISBN 0-199-29092-X. Reviewed by Neuberger J in *The Lancet* 2006; 367(9518): 1231-1232

The author analyses troubling issues like genetic testing with the possibility of abortion for diseases detected in-utero, the possibility of selecting desirable genes in our children, etc.

Ethical dilemmas in paediatrics: cases and commentaries. Editors: Lorry R. Frankel, Amnon Goldworth, Mary V Rorty, William A Silverman. Cambridge University Press, New York, pp 303, 2005. \$80. ISBN 0-521-84744-3. Reviewed by Eric Kodish in *N Eng J Med* 2006; 354:1965-1966.

Some issues are unique to paediatrics such as the involvement of a child in medical decision making when she/he is not fully competent to give consent yet is beginning to participate in decisions. The book develops these through a case based approach.

Making medical decisions for the profoundly mentally disabled. Norman L Cantor. MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., pp 307, 2005. \$35. ISBN 0-262-03331-3. Reviewed by Patricia Backlar in *N Eng J Med* 2006; 354:2199-2200.

Dr. Backlar recommends this book highly for its clear description of dilemmas faced by care givers, health care professionals, lawyers and bioethicists when making decisions for profoundly retarded individuals. Difficult topics such as abortion, sterilisation and organ donation are handled sensitively.

Patient autonomy and the ethics of responsibility. Alfred I Tauber. MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass, pp 328, 2005. \$62 (cloth), \$25 (paper). ISBN 0-262-20160-7 (cloth), 0-262-70112-X (paper). Reviewed by Marshall B Kapp in *N Eng J Med* 2006; 354:1966-1967.

The author deplors the current patient-physician relationship, which is based on rights backed by the law, rather than responsibility and trust. He details an overhaul of medical education to emphasise moral values and ethics.

Behind the silence: Chinese voices on abortion. Nie Jing-Bao. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, pp 289, 2006. \$27-95, £17-99. ISBN 0-7425-2371-3. Reviewed by Sheila McLean in *The Lancet* 2006; 368:357-358.

The author interviewed women in China who had undergone abortion to understand their views. He writes about the Chinese cultural, social and personal attitudes to abortion and population control.

Contemporary issues in health care law and ethics. Editors: Austen Garwood-Gowers, John Tingle, Kay Wheat. Elsevier, pp 338, 2005. \$50-95. ISBN 0-750-68832-7. Reviewed by Leyla Sanai in *The Lancet* 2006; 367:1972.

The reviewer recommends the book for medical students for its clear discussion of many ethical issues in medicine today, where health care law is applied.

The access principle: the case for open access to research and scholarship. John Willinsky. MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass, pp 272, 2005. \$34-95, £22-95. ISBN 0-262-23242-1. Reviewed by Pippa Smart in *The Lancet* 2006; 367:1809-1810.

The author tackles the principle that access to research should be free to all from a sociological and philosophical angle. He includes the right to information with other fundamental human rights and suggests ways concerns of the publishing community can be addressed while ensuring access for all.