



Birth, death, and points in between: 50 patient years

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Richard Stone, after half a century of distinguished medical practice as a physician (mainly in Wanganui), has committed his medical memoirs to paper. Clearly, he intended that his book should be read (and understood) by the medically unqualified as well as his medical colleagues as he has taken pains to explain medical terminology, where appropriate. This makes some sections a little tedious for the medically informed. However, in this slim volume there is much of interest.

A paragraph on his experiences as a resident medical officer activated my own memories:

‘Work was a roller coaster of panic and reward, the awareness of unspoken approval or disapproval of senior colleagues, experienced nurses and patients. Awareness of gaps in knowledge, the hollow ache of fatigue, the relief of an unbroken night’s sleep, the delight of a clinical puzzle coming suddenly into focus. The dejection following an unexpected death, the hopeful or anxious expectant faces of relatives. The vivid experience of seeing severe pain or distress with the possibility for rapid relief in our hands; injecting morphine for pain or acute heart failure, or adrenaline for acute asthma, and seeing the heaving chest relax and the rictus of distress fade.’

Those who have known Richard Stone professionally, as a colleague or as a patient will enjoy reading his reminiscences, as did I.

Recommended.

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