

BOOK REVIEW

Medicine: A Magnificently Illustrated History **by Briony Hudson and Nick Taylor**

Hardback, 80 pages
Big Picture Press, ISBN 9781787419377
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This beautiful book, written by Hudson and illustrated by Taylor, charts important milestones and moments in the history of medicine, from ancient beliefs to modern medical breakthroughs. It is primarily aimed at the younger generation.

The introductory pages define medical history, highlighting its multi-faceted nature, with availability of treatments depending on factors such as class, gender, race and age. Breakthroughs were often about teamwork and collaboration rather than individuals.

The author includes biographical snapshots of pioneers that are not typically included, such as the Indian doctor Dossibai Patell, the first woman to gain a license from the Royal College of Physicians and to become a member of the Royal College of Surgeons and Hanaoka Seishu, a Japanese surgeon who was probably the first to use general anaesthetic. Many of the well-known names associated with key developments are included and they are presented alongside unique illustrations.

It is not an in-depth read but a good introduction for the curious mind. Some topics are covered in more detail than others, for example, malaria, the black death, and cholera all get a double-page spread while other infectious diseases receive less attention.

This short book covers a lot of ground and topics. These are set out in a helpful contents page, grouped under a variety of themes, including the body, medicines, pandemics, health practitioners, and medicine and war. The book's closing pages reflect on future challenges for humankind and feature a useful glossary.

The book will probably appeal most to a younger population. However, this overview of the history of medicine will be of interest to anyone who would like a modern interpretation of significant moments in medical history. The book is very aesthetically pleasing with colourful and engaging full-page illustrations. The unique presentation and informative text makes it an insightful introductory read for young and old alike, or the perfect coffee table book to engage all generations.

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