

BOOK REVIEW

The Rise of Anatomical Study in Medicine and Surgery: The Informed Body **Editors: Andreas K. Demetriades, Hilary S. Morris & Iain Macintyre**

Softback, 188 pages & download <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-032-16680-7#author-1-0>
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This book is thought-provoking and an effective interdisciplinary exploration of how anatomical knowledge has evolved over the centuries. The editors have brought together authors who move beyond the basic historical study of anatomy to incorporate artistic, cultural, ethical and political forces that have helped shape the education and practice of both Medicine and Surgery.

The authors reflect on anatomy as the cornerstone of medicine, not just as a physical science but as one that has influenced and been influenced by social values, power structures, and the ever-changing educational debates about effective practice and gold-standards. These chapters showcase how the knowledge originating from eminent scholars such as Andreas Vesalius has been built on and adapted as knowledge around body donation, illustration, wax modelling has been integrated into anatomical teaching.

The book also looks at the important challenge and debate of inclusivity in modern anatomical teaching. The chapter on labiaplasty lays bare many of the challenges that still exist in anatomical education – the lack of diversity and inclusivity in teaching resources and how this perpetuates many of the challenges into the next generation of educators, researchers and clinicians.

One of this book's greatest strengths is its breadth. The authors trace anatomy's development from the Renaissance dissection theatres to modern integration of ultrasound into anatomy education as a tool for teaching anatomy and other educational practices. This journey demonstrates how education in the field of anatomy has moved beyond just knowledge and the application of it (dissection for learning) to a place where the anatomical learning journey provides a vehicle for reflecting on what has come before, how it has changed and where it needs to go next.

The book shows that what has come before isn't just success, in fact it illustrates that for all the successes, figures such as Anna Morandi Manzolini, Sir Richard Owen, Charles Averill, Sir Robert Carswell all had challenges in their personal and professional lives which are detailed in these chapters. Whilst they represent reconstructions of snapshots of their lives, it reminds us that just like Medicine and Surgery we see only a snapshot of that learner, that donor, that patient and there is always more to learn and understand about the subject.

A significant take away from *The Rise of Anatomical Study in Medicine and Surgery: The Informed Body* is that anatomical study in Medicine and Surgery continues to rise, against a growing backdrop of doing more, with less. Whilst the external perception may be that anatomy doesn't change, this book demonstrates that over the centuries, its value in multiple areas of education is more important now than ever as it adapts to the ever-changing landscape it continues to exist in.

Adam Taylor
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