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The Hippocratic Oath And The Ethics Of Medicine



Synopsis

This engaging book examines what the Hippocratic Oath meant to Greek physicians 2400 years ago and reflects on its relevance to medical ethics today. Drawing on the writings of ancient physicians, Greek playwrights, and modern scholars, each chapter explores one of its passages and concludes with a modern case discussion. The Oath proposes principles governing the relationship between the physician and society and patients. It rules out the use of poison and a hazardous abortive technique. It defines integrity and discretion in physicians' speech. The ancient Greek medical works written during the same period as the Oath reveal that Greek physicians understood that they had a duty to avoid medical errors and learn from bad outcomes. These works showed how and why to tell patients about their diseases and dire prognoses in order to develop a partnership for healing and to build the credibility of the profession. Miles uses these writings to illuminate the meaning of the Oath in its day and in so doing shows how and why it remains a valuable guide to the ethical practice of medicine. This is a book for anyone who loves medicine and is concerned about the ethics and history of this profession.

Book Information

Paperback: 232 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1 edition (June 2, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0195188209

ISBN-13: 978-0195188202

Product Dimensions: 8.1 x 0.8 x 5.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (6 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,242,876 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #87 in Â Books > Textbooks > Medicine & Health Sciences > Medicine > Basic Sciences > Histology #163 in Â Books > Medical Books > Basic Sciences > Histology #603 in Â Books > Textbooks > Medicine & Health Sciences > Administration & Policy > Ethics

Customer Reviews

This book delves into the history and practice of the Hippocratic Oath and the Ethics of Medicine most fully, both in the age in which it evolved and into modern times. It casts new insight on the practice of medicine, both to the individual patient and to the population in general. Medical Ethics is an essential component to the practice of the profession.

This most readable book should be read by all aspiring physicians. There is no doubt that codes from Hippocrates to the JAMA, the Yale and a variety of "home-made" codes have a self serving aspect but one that has become less so (or less obvious) over the years. Dr. Miles emphasis on the social obligations of physicians is more than timely--the many problems in medicine today (from the shameful lack of access to rampant poverty which plays a role in health and disease)are often passed over as "system errors" as though they were acts of nature. That, however, is the point: Cyclones and earthquakes are things with which we have to deal and which (for now, at least) we cannot prevent. The lack of access to medical care, the fact that many elderly are unable to afford their medication and those without part B cannot see a physician until they are deathly sick, the growing disparity between the grindingly poor and the immensely wealthy are that way because it is the way we have structured our society. They can be changed and physicians have a responsibility to be leaders in that field. Dr. Miles emphasizes this fact--and one hopes that it is taken to heart. This is a book that every medical student should read cover to cover as should any physician or allied health care worker. Indeed, it is a book that the layman would find profitable, informative and in places amusing. It would, by the way, make a wonderful graduation gift to the fledgling physician. If one has any interest in medicine this book is a must.

You will be rewarded for hard work. A tour de force through Greek and Egyptian medical history, proving that yesterday's stories are today's truths. Look for a Hippocratic Doctor when you are ill, even if he won't treat you if you just feel ugly!

The author does not cover the great Hippocratic physicians. These are Hippocrates, St. Luke of Biblical fame and John Locke of Natural Rights and Constitutional fame. Utilizing the Hippocratic Oath was Leo Alexander, MD who handed the prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials of Nazi doctors the first draft of the Nuremberg Code, later the Helsinki Code and adopted in American Federal Laws. The secret is that the Oath has been adopted by religion, constitution making, and international law.

The book itself was in excellent condition. The content is priceless. Important concepts explained and explored in easily digestible language,

great

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