

The New Faces of Medicine – a Journey and a Perspective

Adib Jatene (in memoriam)

Faculdade de Medicina, Universidade de São Paulo, SP – Brazil

Professor Protásio da Luz, basic science and clinical researcher and renowned cardiologist, offers us his newest book *The New Faces of Medicine*. It is a presentation of his vision of the scientific and humanistic bases of medicine, its evolution and its future.

With expressive illustrations, the book presents us with the importance of the connection of technique with the human, of science with the relationship of physicians and patients. “It’s not the anamnesis yet. It’s just the first approach to know the person.” This seemingly trivial sentence contains deep wisdom and experience of the professional and professor of medicine practicing one of the major goals of the university: to propagate knowledge for improvement of students and physicians in general.

Above all, the instigating reading takes us on a journey through the history of achievements of science and medicine, with their technological progress on the understanding of diseases and their treatments.

In parallel, the book presents a critical analysis of our health system, encompassing the training, specialization and performance of physicians in Brazil, as well as the structure of financing and care made available to health professionals and to the population. Among other aspects, it is interesting to discover how medicine requires technology and, at the same time, how it can be humanized and applied sensibly and with a holistic view. On the other hand, the book leads us to the idea of medicine as an activity strongly aimed at the person as a social community, transiting between the individual and the collective. As much as technology has evolved, the person remains the same and, in the face of illness, becomes an afflicted, distressed and scared being. I often say that the opposite of fear is not courage; the opposite of fear is faith. Therefore, the physician works along with the individual as a person and, at the same time, is inserted into a social context, with profound implications. The book shows the importance of institutions in teaching and sustaining this path, with examples

relevant to our environment. In this process, the author is able to contribute with his personal experience to a universal wisdom and lead us softly down this path, but at the same time, in a clear, dynamic and contemplative way. One feels, in these reports, the voice of Hemingway: “If you want to be universal, talk about your own village”.

The author also gives us his contribution with regard to the need and the opportunity for the use of the scientific method, of the accuracy in the design, of the conduction and conclusion of clinical and experimental studies, and the importance of the critical mind of the reader, when studying articles published in various medical journals. Above all, he puts us face to face with the interface between the academic scientific method and its application to clinical reasoning. When he comments about the mentors who guided his way, he introduces us to something that only recently came to be called “evidence-based medicine”, which is nothing but the applied systematization of the scientific method to the medical activity. He shares with the reader his experience in the various aspects of academic life, in a manner accessible and pertinent to the everyday world of all those interested in understanding the making and receiving of medicine as something interwoven into the human condition. He especially shows medical science as something intuitive and simple, not as something inaccessible and complicated. And above all, he shows how a physician must immerse himself or herself in the scientific method to build a solid body of knowledge with Cartesian bases, doing so with humility without disregarding common sense, and cultivating honesty of thought and action.

The book ends with “Future challenges” which is a reaffirmation of belief in the humane essence of medicine - “The physician will never disappear ...” without losing the perspective that technology will continue to provide us with better and more effective ways to act, if we maintain critical thinking and minds open to the new. It is timely and relevant to analyze that “The new is not necessarily the best”, as the author didactically points out.

It is a book with special meaning for medical students, physicians, researchers and health administrators in general, but thanks to its clear and objective language without losing good emotional charge, also to the general public. It can be read in the order preferred by the reader, since despite their broad spectrum, the chapters are all complete in themselves and have great relevance.

Keywords

Adib Jatene (in memorian); Editorial; Teaching; Knowledge; Faculty, Medical; Information Dissemination.

Mailing Address: Protásio Lemos da Luz •

Avenida Dr. Enéas Carvalho de Aguiar, 44, 5ª andar, bloco 2, sala 8, Jardim Paulista. Postal Code 05403-900, São Paulo, SP – Brazil

E-mail: protasio.luz@incor.usp.br

Manuscript received January 28, 2015; revised manuscript January 29, 2015; accepted January 30, 2015.

Adib Domingos Jatene

Emeritus Professor of the Faculty of Medicine
University of São Paulo

DOI: 10.5935/abc.20150023