

Stevo Julius: Neither Red Nor Dead. Coming of Age in Former Yugoslavia During and After World War II. Ann Arbor: Medvista Publisher; 2003. (2nd edition, 2004). 481 pages; ISBN: 0972951113; price: US\$15.95

The choice of the title "Neither Red Nor Dead" (J. McCarthy's slogan "Better Dead Than Red") succinctly reflects the attitude toward life of a dedicated scientist, physician, and a great spirit, Stevo Julius.

Stevo Julius graduated from the Zagreb University School of Medicine in the former Yugoslavia. He first showed interest in psychological aspects of medicine and physiology of hypertension during his specialization in internal medicine in Zagreb, and this is the period of his life he covered in the book.

Since 1964, Stevo Julius has worked in Ann Arbor and recently become a Professor Emeritus of Medicine and Physiology at the University of Michigan, where he spent 40 years on the faculty. He published more than 350 papers and chapters in books on a wide spectrum of issues related to pathophysiology of hypertension, from invasive pharmacologic probes to clinical studies and epidemiology of hypertension. Stevo Julius received numerous awards and distinguished himself as an expert and educator on hypertension. He trained over 50 specialists in hypertension, many of whom became recognized lead-

ing experts all across the world. He has been elected honorary member of the Australian, Finnish, Hungarian, Spanish, Polish, and Swedish Hypertension Societies as well as of the European Society of Hypertension.

Stevo Julius was born in a respected Jewish family. His father was a known psychiatrist, his mother an energetic surgical nurse, and his elder brother an internationally recognized political analyst and journalist. During World War II, Stevo was expelled from school and joined partisan fight against fascists in his early teenage years, together with other members of his family.

The book "Neither red no dead" is not a complete and tedious autobiography or memoirs highlighting the exceptional contributions of the author with an aim to satisfy his moral consciousness, as memoirs often do. First of all, Julius is a gifted narrator, telling a rich and interesting story written as fugue in several layers. The core of the narrative are chosen facts and anecdotes, illustrated by quoted dialogues and lyrical description of scenery and circumstances and interwoven with personal accounts of events.

In parts, the book reads almost as a thriller, because of internal tensions and emotions, eliciting ever growing interest in the reader.

Julius describes dramatic and dangerous of war, precarious after-war circumstances, and political totalitarianism in which the author himself was involved, but escaped safely. Suicide of his father after he fell a victim of a political conspiracy and fight between political and professional powers is one of the most gripping parts of the book.

The author intended this book primarily for his colleagues and friends, those who do not know what happened during World War II and in years after the new Yugoslavia was established but would find interesting to learn about Stevo's personal account of controversial times of their youth. The book would also be valuable to younger readers to better understand the past and previous generations, and every reader will certainly recognize moral problems that seem to survive every generation.

The autobiography covers Stevo's life as a young man, who experienced many threats and human and moral dilemmas and remained

optimistic and hopeful in spite of it all. The appealing part is a mixture of naive observations of a teenager reported by from the perspective of an experienced man.

I was a year younger colleague of Stevo at Zagreb Medical School, and chapter "Learning Medicine" evoked many memories and a wish that the chapter were longer and more detailed. It is interesting how big difference between students in consecutive study years apparently existed at that time. In my memory, contrary to later simplified descriptions, there was quite rich and diversified students' life, with diverse understandings and aims, besides the "official" political life and formal organization of students. Besides organized formal groups, there were others expressing different interests. For instance in the field of learning, a group was attracted by international relations and started to organize "official" and "unofficial" exchange with colleagues from foreign countries. On the other hand, the Students' People's Health Club was spending Sundays in different villages speaking to people, showing educational films, learning

and making surveys about peasants' life and their health needs.

I remember Stevo being a member of the elite among students, determined, powerful, and experienced. He was the editor of the students' journal *Medicinar*, an intellectual, determined to his goal, passionate about medical science, a leading person in an informal learning and research interest group.

Immediately after graduation, Stevo Julius had his medical baptism of fire while organizing health care and a hospital in Goražde, a small Bosnian town with a traditional way of life in cultural setting very different from that Julius grew up in. The vivid description of that experience that introduced him to "real life" reflects an interesting combination of love for those simple people and an elitist, sometimes even cynical, belief in superiority of his position and civilization values he represented.

In this autobiography, we witness the development of a scientist from a poor country under adverse conditions. But, such conditions do not always present the limitation; sometimes, they are a stimulating

factor. The role of family, personal abilities, experience, moral maturity, strokes of luck, they all play a role, but a strong sense of vocation that a person feels, in Stevo's case nearly religious belief in the role of science in medicine, possibly has the strongest influence. To be a clinical scientist for Stevo does not mean only a learned skill to neatly collect and describe facts, but to open new ways of thinking and new understanding of an extremely complex system such as a human being is. I quote:

Upon reflection, I still do not fully understand why I became possessed by an irresistible urge to leave the country. I felt rather strongly that I wanted to do research, but it could not have been only that. It must have something to do with my father's death, with disappointment in my former comrades, with a search for stability in an unpredictability world, and with my inner penchant for adventure."

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Heller RF. Evidence for population health. New York (NY): Oxford University Press; 2005. 126 pages; ISBN 0-19-852974-0; price: £19.95

Field: Public health.

Format: pocket book.

Audience: Medical students, public health workers, and policy makers.

Purpose: To expand the knowledge of medical students, public

health workers, and policy makers in the area of evidence-based public health, and to emphasize specificities of scientific approach to population health.

Contents: The book is divided into three parts. The first part con-

sists of three chapters and describes the first point of the population health evidence cycle, ie, asking the relevant question. It provides a theoretical rationale for the "population approach" concept, arguments the need to develop methods for

improving evidence-based population health, and explains the main differences between evidence-based medicine and evidence-based population health. The second part is divided into four chapters and provides information on the evidence collection methods, which is the second stage of the population evidence cycle. This part of the book deals with measuring the impact of risks and interventions on the population, and gives appropriate outcome measures for assessing health outcomes. It highlights the importance of understanding the differences in approach to individual vs population health by emphasizing the difference in the “levels of evidence” between these two approaches and proposes a “population evidence hierarchy,” which is most important for policy makers. The last part of the book is divided into five chapters and deals with understanding and use of research evidence in public health, which is the third and fourth stage of the population evi-

dence cycle. Although very concise, it is probably the most important and most interesting part of the book. It involves risk perception, managing of knowledge, and implementation of evidence in policy making and practice, which are particularly valuable for policy makers.

Highlights: The book is well-structured and easy to read. Each chapter ends with key messages intended for different groups of readers, ie, students, public health professionals, and policy makers, and offers a useful list of source literature. The problem of understanding results of scientific research and their implementation in practice is well recognized, and this is a valuable attempt to decrease this problem in the field of population health. Books such as this one can increase awareness of the need for further investigations in this area. The most important value of this work is that it recognizes and clearly defines the difference between clini-

cal evidence-based medicine and evidence-based public health.

Limitations: The book does not provide a sufficient number of examples or a detailed discussion on critical appraisal of scientific evidence in public health.

Related reading: Although evidence-based medicine is a well-recognized approach in clinical practice, it is still underused in the field of public health. A relatively small number of books have been published in this topic, but those that could be suggested as additional sources of useful information include “Evidence-based public health” by RC Brownson and colleagues; “Evidence-based health policy: problems and possibilities” by V Lin and B Gibson; and “Evidence-based health care: how to make health policy and management decisions” by JA Muir Gray.

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Swapan Kumar Adhikari. The Role of Mathematics on Human Structure. Howrah, West Bengal, India: Dipali Publication; 2003. 150 pages; ISBN 81-901643-0-9; price: US\$10.95.

Field: Physiology.

Format: Paperback.

Audience: According to the words of the author himself, the book is primarily dedicated to the research workers, physicians, and medical surgeons to calculate physiological movements on the basis of

degrees of freedom and to replace the bones properly to avoid shortening and extension of limbs.

Purpose: The book aims to present physiology and anatomy in terms of mathematical expressions in general and geometrical deduction in particular. The motto the

author is that “an investigation cannot be strictly called scientific unless it admits mathematical deductions.”

Content: This is a very unusual compilation of history of sciences, anatomy, physiology, and mathematical deductions. It could be an

additional reading for orthopedic surgeons, cardiologists, and hematologists, but it demands knowledge or at least the understanding of calculus.

The author tried to resolve the forces acting on specific parts of human body during specific movements and describe the changes that happen to the structures. The pattern of forces is described in details and explained by Newtonian laws of motion. For better description and enhanced understanding, the author provided many pictures and sketches, mainly of poor quality. Presented mathematical models quite correctly describe physiological functions, although the calculi applied are not easy to follow. The author did not successfully achieve the primary aim of the book: he took for granted the reader's extensive knowledge of higher algebra and calculus, omitting the explanations of the procedure and

conclusions. The reader is left with the facts that should be accepted at the face value, and not totally convinced into the mathematical procedure. Besides, the symbols used in this book are not the standard symbols, so the extra effort is needed to follow the text. For somebody lacking skill in mathematics, the help of extra mathematical books would be needed to resolve these problems. The reading is also frequently disrupted by the unusual usage of capital letters for different physical parameters. Incorporation of historical facts into the sentences dealing with mathematical or physical conclusions was not the best idea for keeping the integrity and clearness of the text.

Commentary: The book is nevertheless worth reading as it provides many interesting facts from the field of history of science, physiology, and mathematics, which piques and maintains the cu-

riosity of the reader. It is a good survey of the development of medicine from the descriptive science dedicated only to cure to the quantitative natural science examining the processes and structures of the human body. The works of Leonardo de Vinci and Descartes are given the most attention, although the author describes bits and pieces of history from the Egyptian and Antique times until today. Lot can be learned about the scientists investigating the anatomy of the human body and movement. In spite of the convincing sentences and history arguments, I would not agree with the author that God needed mathematics to create the World, but I do agree that we need mathematics to understand it.

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