

left out, clothes and stethoscopes ... they scribble messages on the board: Someone fucking clean up.'

We hear one consultant — a pinstriped old boy from the old guard, now sick and a patient himself — ruefully reflect with a colleague on how he was asked by a junior doctor about CPR: 'He wanted to know if I'd like — how did he say it? If I'd like to have CPR ... Like it was a jar of sweets up on a shelf.'

The only criticism of this otherwise flawless novel is in the dialogue between Tom Patrick, the hospital chaplain, and Nathan Munro, the consultant oncologist. This conversation feels stilted, forced, and slightly unrealistic, serving only to labour a point about whether a competent doctor devoid of compassion is still a good doctor.

Holden Caulfield shared with us in *The Catcher in the Rye* that: 'What really knocks me out is a book that, when you're all done reading it, you wish the author that wrote it was a terrific friend of yours and you could call him up on the phone whenever you felt like it.'

After reading *Histories* you will be left feeling the same way about Gugliani.

Maryam Naeem,

GP, Tulasi Medical Centre, Dagenham, Essex.

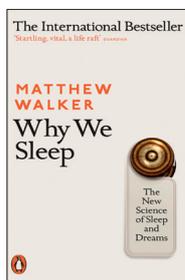
Email: maryam.naeem@icloud.com

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Why We Sleep: The New Science of Sleep and Dreams

Matthew Walker

Allen Lane, 2018, PB, 368pp, £9.99, 978-0141983769



WAKE UP TO SLEEP

You will probably be familiar with some effects of sleep deprivation — underperforming, being error-prone and snappy — but may be less familiar with some of the more insidious effects of sleep loss, which include impairment of immune responses, an increased risk of cardiovascular and

metabolic disorders and cancer, and a link with Alzheimer's disease. Sleep, says Professor Matthew Walker, the author of this engrossing book, should be regarded as the 'pre-eminent force in the health trinity, along with a balanced diet and exercise'.

Walker is no slouch, and is very persuasive. He is Professor of Neuroscience and Psychology and Director of the Sleep and Neuroimaging Laboratory at the University of California at Berkeley, and previously worked at Harvard. He is a good communicator — his writing is accessible and he uses metaphors and analogies effectively to get across new and complex ideas. There is sometimes a bit too much of the 'you'll never believe this ...' and occasionally his descriptions of brain activity verge on the anthropomorphic — but perhaps he is right about that too.

He sets the scene extremely well, with lucid explanations of the roles of melatonin and adenosine in establishing the circadian rhythm and the functions of REM and non-REM sleep. He is interesting on the different, fixed circadian rhythms of 'morning larks' and 'night owls', and the adjustments that education and business might advantageously consider making for them. I thought that the siesta culture throws a bit of a spanner in the works, and that he didn't really deal adequately with this different but widespread sleep pattern.

The book is quite fact-packed, and Walker realises this, even saying that if it lulls the reader to sleep he would be quite happy, and advocating dipping in and out of the chapters in no particular order. You will be able to choose from accounts of the benefits of sleep for the brain, the physical impacts of sleep deprivation, how and why we dream, sleep disorders, and dealing with sleep disturbances.

The effect of temperature on sleep is interesting. Although a warm bath is generally regarded as a prelude to a good sleep, Walker is clear that a drop in core body temperature is associated with good sleep quality, and that an ambient bedroom temperature of around 65°F is ideal for most people.

Walker sets out his stall for a sleep revolution in the final chapter. His recommendations comprise attention to domestic temperature and lighting, personal and public education, organisational change such as providing incentives for healthy sleeping, and creating flexible shifts, and, at a societal level, introducing criminal penalties for damage and death caused by driving when drowsy and, perhaps most importantly, systematising the awareness of the health benefits of consistent and plentiful slumber.

Roger Jones,

Editor, *BJGP*.

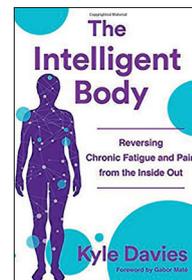
Email: roger.jones@kcl.ac.uk

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The Intelligent Body: Reversing Chronic Fatigue and Pain from the Inside Out

Kyle Davies

WW Norton & Company, 2017, HB, 304pp, £14.45, 978-0393712056



EXPLORING SOFTWARE

Current medical school teaching covers a great deal about hardware body, and pathology. Little is taught about software being, or the mammal's autonomic response to stressors.

The Intelligent Body acknowledges people as spiritual beings having a human experience, reminds us about Selye's general adaptation syndrome (how mammalian bodies cope with stress), and our individual 'stress buckets' — which can only contain so much before overflowing. Davies looks at how emotions arise, and reminds us how the intelligent body gives feedback and communicates with our software being through emotions: physiological phenomena. He then tells us how we all block the flow of emotions at times, leading to pent-up emotional distress — which helps to fill our buckets. He reminds us of the difference between high vibrational positive emotions such as joy, love, compassion, happiness, excitement, and bliss, and low ones such as anger, fear, boredom, frustration, sadness, and disgust, and how these each affect us either positively (high) or negatively (low). 'Emotions', he states, 'are a tap on the shoulder inviting us to align our words and actions with our true self in this now moment', and explores this from different perspectives through the book.

Davies explores the limitations of just changing thought patterns (cognitive change) as opposed to achieving deeper