

Simpson comments that:

'If India was the jewel in the crown of the British Empire, the jewel in the crown of the NHS (general practice) was dependent on medical labour from the former Raj.'

Reasoning that the research is not a celebration of migrants or of the NHS's reliance on them, it is a critical appraisal offering a new perspective on the history of the NHS. They left countries that needed them, came with their own prejudices, and, like other non-migrant GPs, some pioneered, some became activists, and some endured the margins. It is, however, a celebration of historical inclusion and contributes to future thinking about the history of the NHS.

For me, it had the additional effect of being a personal narrative. Unintendedly emotional, I became lost in thought at some parts. The oral studies uncover many who were essentially 'Midnight's Children' and who were primarily trained in British colleges in immediate post-colonial India.

I remember my late father telling me how he read George Bernard Shaw and, while a medical student in India, was impatient to see the new film *My Fair Lady*. This, among other memoirs, echoes throughout the book. Unlike the children in the book who may have been deterred by watching their parents' struggles in general practice, I witnessed firsthand the doctor-patient contact that inspired me to follow my South Asian GP father.

This book should be read by anyone interested in the contribution to British medicine made by NHS doctors from overseas, and adds to previous historical work on medical migration and the after-effects of Empire.

Easy to follow and highly recommended, Julian Simpson's book provides a clear and comprehensive account of this suddenly very topical slice of history, and does exactly what he set out to do — writes migrants back into the history of the NHS.

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MIGRANTS WHO MADE THE NHS: RCGP EXHIBITION

A fascinating exhibition 'Migrants who made the NHS' has been installed on the ground floor of the RCGP, and runs until December 2018. It provides striking background information and displays about the staffing crisis in general practice when, in the wake of the Collings Report on general practice in England in 1950 and in the face of massive over-investment in hospital medicine, there was an exodus of British GPs to countries such as Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. There are dramatic displays depicting the appalling racial discrimination faced by these doctors, particularly women, and some equally moving accounts of how these adversities were overcome.

Many of the new Asian GPs were great innovators — they built state-of-the-art health centres, and the first ever GP cooperative was established in Bolton in 1976. Outside the surgery many Asian GPs became active and prominent in local and national civic and medical politics, including the foundation of the Overseas Doctors Association and work in the RCGP.

The debt that we owe them for resuscitating general practice at a time of peril is immense.

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