

Doctors as writers

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Dear Editor,

We medical doctors do a lot of writing related to our profession. That is as it should be, and must be encouraged. But somewhere, in the background, some of us have ambitions of doing creative writing like biographies, fiction etc. We think that like in the West, when we retire we will write our biographies. But it does not happen as we continue to slog so that we can go on surviving. Such is our fate. There are some who have courageously, done some fiction writing like our own prolific college principal Dr. Hemang Dixit; then there are Dr. Lakshmi N. Prasad, Dr. Mathura KC, Dr. Jwala Raj Pandey, Dr. Yogendra B. Shrestha, Dr. Bheesma Raj Prasai, Dr. Arun Sayami, Dr. Ravi Thapalia and Dr. Ram Prasad Pokhrel to name a few. Some have written stories, some plays and some poetry.

Many medical doctors in the West have left their profession to do creative writing and have done exceedingly well. Anton Chekov, the famous Russian short story writer comes to mind. A. J. Cronin wrote some wonderful novels like "The Citadel" and "Keys to the Kingdom", both of which were made famous movies. I like to think "Citadel" influenced me in the choice of my career. We all know of Arthur Conan Doyle whose Sherlock Holmes created history in the

detective genre and his books are still compulsory reading in schools. John Keats the great English poet is another one who died of tuberculosis at a young age when he was a medical student. We have all read Somerset Maugham's classic "Of Human Bondage" which was made into a movie where the hero was played by the late Dirk Bogarde, the very talented British actor. Maugham went to write some beautiful fictions like "The Razor's Edge" and "Liza of Lambeth", the latter recounts his experiences as a medical student. His short stories were interesting. Many of them were based on his travels in the East. His was a clear unadorned style of writing with a shrewd understanding of human nature. Robin Cook and Michael Crichton of "Coma" and "Jurassic Park" fame, are still actively writing. Deepak Chopra the proponent of Holistic medicine is churning out books like an industry and has spawned a cult. All of us have read Richard Gordon and his hilarious Doctor stories. How can we forget Sir Lancelot Spratt the famous surgeon of St. Bart's! The movies were also very popular. So, it appears there is scope for us medicos to write and earn fame. With our exposure over the years to human foibles, the good and the bad, there should not be any dearth of good stories. God speed and good writing!

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