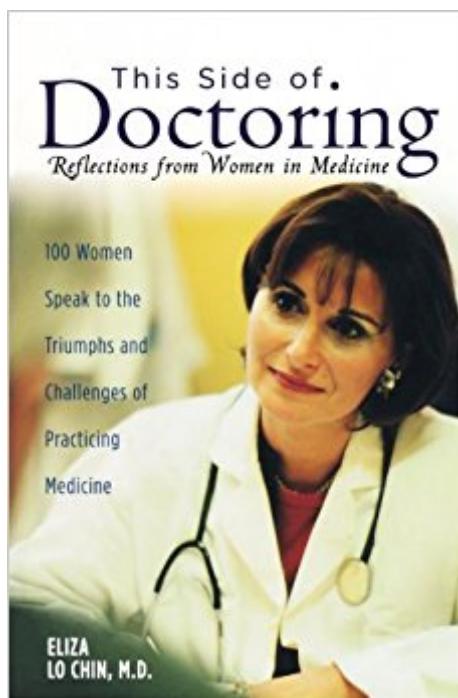


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# This Side Of Doctoring: Reflections From Women In Medicine



## **Synopsis**

Throughout history women have practiced the art of medicine and healing. Yet they have always faced difficulties in the medical profession--not only have they struggled to gain acceptance from their male colleagues, they have also struggled to find a balance between being a doctor and being a wife and mother. Here, in *This Side of Doctoring* Eliza Lo Chin offers a penetrating analysis of what it's like to be a woman in the highly competitive field of medicine. Written over the last century and a half, this collection of personal stories, poems, essays, and quotations reveals the intimate lives of over a hundred female physicians. There are touching testimonies from early 19th-century medical pioneers like Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman to graduate from medical school and Harriet Hunt, who had her own practice that catered to women and children yet was never formally trained, to modern-day medical students and doctors. Poignant and compelling, these narratives offer insights into the struggles and triumphs of women in medicine. Much like an American quilt, this book is a unique and richly textured patchwork of each woman's extraordinary life and career. This assemblage of so many different voices exemplifies the varied paths that women have created within the medical profession. Together they stand as an enduring tribute to the dedication of all women physicians to both their patients and their families. "These accounts of doctoring and family concerns are universal enough to transcend gender in relationships with patients and colleagues, balancing work and family, and finding meaning in one's profession.... For those looking for a compendium of experiences that document the lives of a diverse cross-section of women in US medicine, *This Side of Doctoring* is a fine addition to the literature."--The Journal of the American Medical Association

## **Book Information**

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## Customer Reviews

Any woman contemplating a career as a physician or already working in the profession will gain a good deal of insight from this collection of personal essays and poems by female physicians over the last century and a half. Organized into categories such as "Internship and Residency," "Mothering and Doctoring," and "Barriers," the anthology presents feminine and feminist perspectives on all aspects of a medical career. Most of the pieces are contemporary and previously unpublished, solicited by Chin, an internist and former Columbia University medical professor. In her essay "We're Not in Kansas Anymore: Men as Medical Mentors," pediatrician and author (Her Own Medicine) Sayantani DasGupta describes how her search for a "female" professional mentor turned up a vital male role model instead. Psychiatrist Bhuvana Chandra's evocative poem recalls how much it meant to her father that she became a doctor. Several pieces deal with reconciling the commitment to patients with the commitment to family life, such as Molly Carnes's down-to-earth "Balancing Family and Career: Advice from the Trenches." Chin also provides a historical overview of the barriers that faced 19th-century women physicians like Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman to graduate from an American medical school, and Harriet Hunt, whose recollections are among the archival pieces featured in the anthology. This is an engaging and frequently inspiring collection. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.  
--This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"These accounts of doctoring and family concerns are universal enough to transcend gender in relationships with patients and colleagues, balancing work and family, and finding meaning in one's profession.... For those looking for a compendium of experiences that document the lives of a diverse cross-section of women in US medicine, This Side of Doctoring is a fine addition to the literature." "What a delight to discover so many talented, skilled physician authors! The writing is nuanced, the emotions are genuine, and the delivery is candid."

As a pre-med student, thinking about entering the field of medicine, I have been searching for a place to find honest pictures of what my life might look like as a woman and a physician. I appreciated the candid images of both the challenges and rewards I will have ahead of me. I continue to read and reread some of the most powerful stories, and I hope they will help give me a

sense of belonging and connection, as I move forward in my own journey into medicine as a young woman.

In the amazing book, more than 100 female physicians share their intimate feelings about their experiences as medical students, residents and practicing clinicians including how they often struggled to balance work and family. Many of the contributors are true pioneers -entering medicine when few women were accepted into medical schools, at a time when too often they had to tolerate what today would be considered obvious sexual harassment. The poems, stories and essays demonstrate the drive, courage and heart of the authors. This is a book everyone should read!!!

As a recent med school graduate, I found this book to be enlightening on many fronts. I have wrestled with similar issues and have had to make my own hard choices about my career and life, while living with the guilt and self-doubt of my decisions. This book touched a nerve with me because it presents the many issues women in the field of medicine have to deal with daily, and for the rest of their lives from the perspective of women who have tread this path and understand the complex conflicts and possibilities of being a woman and being in medicine. I especially enjoyed the section on the early pioneers of woman in medicine, as well as sections written by doctors who faced much harder decisions in their time, and helped make the options available to today's modern med school graduate possible. My favorite part though, is the way the editor culled not just stories and histories from her contributors, but POEMS which evoke the emotional struggle of women in medicine, that many have had to repress and not face in their daily hectic time short juggling routine. I found myself forced to stop running on the treadmill of life and really reflect. Thank you for helping me to really reflect on my own life in medicine and for helping me honor and respect those who have made the joys of medicine and womanhood possible for everyone.

This book is not only informative and enlightening but enjoyable and inspiring. There is something in this book for everyone, whether you are a medical student, premed, physician or retired physician. Historians, feminists and the medical community will also find this book invaluable. 'This Side of Doctoring' is like a time-capsule of women in medicine, from the days of pioneer Elizabeth Blackwell to female medical students today (who are also still pioneering change in medicine). Lo Chin has compiled the who, what, why, when and how of women doctors. The stories, essays, and especially poems, capture the spirit of women physicians past and present. With more than 100 women's stories, it accurately portrays the sacrifices and rewards of this challenging career. I especially

enjoyed the chapters on mothering, the early pioneers and barriers to women in medicine. Because it is an anthology, you can digest at your own convenience, read one piece or a chapter, good for busy women like me! It is a book to which I will constantly refer.

Of course, in a book with this many contributors, the writing is a bit uneven. but the overall effect is wonderful. Actually, it is somewhat surprising that there is relatively little non-fiction about men physicians. About women, there is practically nothing. This volume tries to cover everything, from the first "lady" doctors to graduate from medical school to the multiple paths medical study takes now that about 50% of medical school classes are women. The pulls between family and practice are well described. Some women choose not to have children of their own. I was especially struck by the story of an orthopedic surgeon who sacrificed 20 years of her life to be one of the boys and then hit the glass ceiling with a crash. Fortunately, she found a good position at another academic center. How many do not? I loved the editor's poem, which both in form and in words illustrated the family/physician duality. There are too many to cite in a review. I recently talked to my daughter about how much I disliked the use of "female" doctor instead of woman doctor. She said, "Why don't you just call them "doctor?" I'm afraid we're not there yet. Women tend to crowd into psychiatry, pediatrics, and now internal medicine and even ob/gyn. This volume illustrates in many ways what we can hope is to be a total success story.

This Side Of Doctoring: Reflections From Women In Medicine showcases a superbly presented and collection of stories, poems, and essays capturing what it means to be a female physician. Ranging from pioneering lady doctors to today's increasing numbers of women medical students, This Side Of Doctoring explores and reveals the struggles and triumphs of women in the past 150 years of western medicine. Included are intimate sketches of the contributors personal lives and experiences that seldom (if ever) appear in traditional, male oriented medical writings and histories. This Side Of Doctoring is strongly recommended for personal, professional, and academic reading lists and reference collections, especially in the areas and disciplines of Medical History and Women's Studies.

Having recently graduated residency with two young children, I couldn't stop reading this book. I want to plaster these essays on the cover of the Wall Street Journal: this is why medical training has to change! I am buying this book for all of my friends.

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