



## **Fame and Pain**

Jayindra Fernando MS

### **Synopsis**

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### **Reviewer:**

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Though surgeons may not realise, medical events especially surgical procedures change the life of many and even the course of surgical practice occasionally. This is more so when it is related to politicians and celebrities. Hence illnesses and surgical operations of celebrities are dissected in detail and are a matter of great public interest though the affected personalities would try everything at their disposal to hide the facts. Most such events are discussed in depth by experts contributing to reputed medical journals. This helps the medical community to understand the events and learn lessons from them.

During the training of medical undergraduates and postgraduates, we come across many important names, events and personalities related to surgery. McNaughton's rule, Ondine's curse, Minerva Jacket, Oedipus complex, Tutankhamun's curse, Queen Victoria's haemophilia gene and Anthony Eden's biliary stricture are some such examples. Most of us pay little attention to the interesting details behind the terminology due to lack of time and

difficulty in access to material. Jayindra Fernando who is well known for his artistic abilities, writing skills and surgical prowess has taken the trouble to study such events and people in detail and compile a book for the benefit of those who are less enthusiastic towards historical events. According to Fernando his interest was initiated when he read the footnotes in '*Baily and Love*' which was the bible of undergraduate surgery. The result is a well researched book describing stories related to 100 famous people. Even the important personalities from Greek mythology whose names have been adapted to medical terms are described in detail.

Fernando has included one Sri Lankan personality - King Rajasinghe of Sithawaka among the 100 stories. He appears to have missed or purposely omitted our own SJV Chelvanayakam's parkinsonism. Chelva's parkinsonism was hypothesised to be secondary to organotin exposure during his in utero life or infancy while his parents were living in the Kinta valley, Ipoh, Malaysia [1]. Probably

Fernando is hoping to publish a collection of 'painful stories' of famous Sri Lankans at a future date.

This book is written in simple style without any padding or flowery language. Even the few medical terms used are well explained for the non-medical reader to comprehend easily. Factual details given are supported by reliable references for the discerning reader to verify such details. This authenticity makes the reading interesting, worthwhile and enjoyable. Fernando has not tried to taint the stories by adding his opinion. It is upto the reader to make his or her conclusions in most instances. Not only does it make interesting reading, it shows how much surgical illnesses can change a person's life and even a country's destiny. This is an important lesson for both surgical trainees and surgeons when they look after surgical patients.

The book is beautifully illustrated with 30 line drawings by the author and his daughter Randhini. It looks like the daughter has beaten the mastery of her father. The book is very reasonably priced and makes an ideal gift both to the trainees and trainers. I am sure the resource persons of the annual academic sessions of the College of Surgeons of Sri Lanka would prefer to have a copy of this book than the miscellaneous objects they receive as tokens of appreciation from the College every year!

### References

1. Chelvanayakam SJ. Parkinson disease of ranking lawyer and legislator SJV Chelvanayakam: a hypothesis. Ceylon Medical Journal 2003; 48:133-135