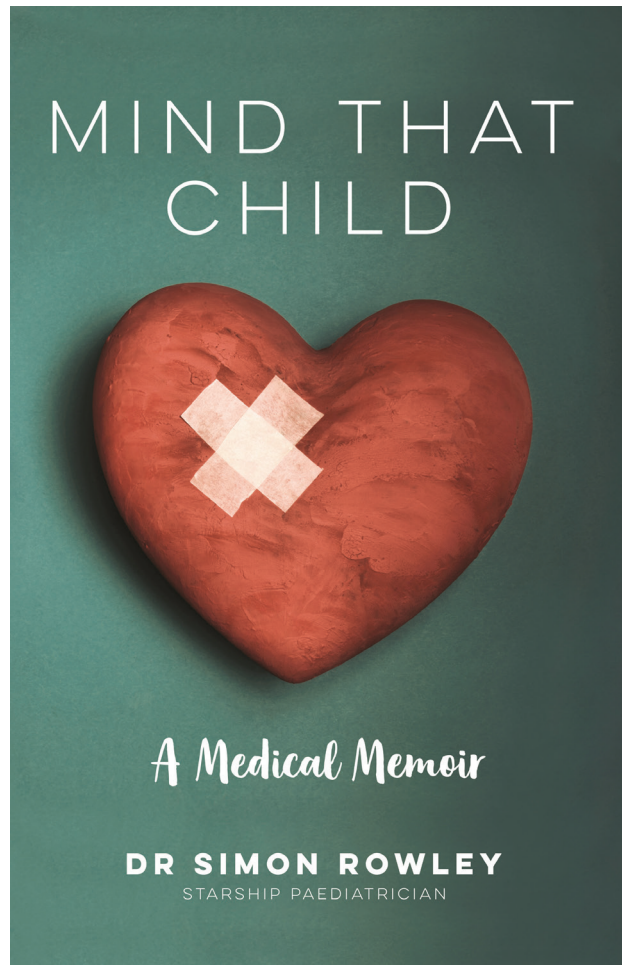


Mind That Child; A Medical Memoir

Frank Frizelle



Dr Simon Rowley. Published by Penguin Random House, New Zealand.
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This is a book that recounts the experience of the Auckland Starship's paediatrician Dr Simon Rowley over his professional lifetime. It is co-authored by ghost writer Adam Dudding, who is a senior reporter from the Stuff website.

The book is an easy and interesting read (even for a surgeon). It covers Simon's early childhood in South Otago, his medical training, paediatric training and subsequent consultant life. The book demonstrates Simon's view about the complementary nature of public and private clinical practice.

Besides covering the life cycle of the paediatrician, the 12 chapters also cover the author's views and experience on some specific paediatric issues such as autism and ADHD, however the subplot for the book is the wider social issues around the development of children, including the effects of poverty on children's (and subsequent adults') health. There are chapters on children raising children, and the influence of the Brainwave trust on trying to change things, as well as an interesting chapter on the period when overseas adoption (especially of children from Russia) was common,

and the issues around this. The narrative is intermixed with patient stories, which add colour and depth as well as, at times, entertainment to the story.

There is an interesting repeating topic of the issue of complaints. The author's frustration and challenge of dealing with them is apparent, in an environment where the medical team are doing their best in an imperfect world. This is something most doctors will be aware of and sympathise with.

The author repeatedly emphasises the impact of health on the most vulnerable of social factors, especially poverty, poor diet, poor quality accommodation, as well as the impact drug taking and alcohol consumption. He makes the point that this damage can become lifelong and multigenerational, and as such are very important factors to manage to improve the health of children.

The book is well written, easy to read and well presented. Most doctors interested in the changing face of medicine over the last 40 years will enjoy this.

Competing interests:

Nil.

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