



for stronger participation in and support for primary health care, especially in the past 25 - 30 years. Increasingly, the work of GSH went far beyond teaching and intramural services to prevention, public health and setting standards for care.

The authors have made an extraordinary effort to seek information from those who worked at GSH, not only from the medical elite, which is a common weakness of hospital histories. The story is told through time, as well as through structures and processes, and the challenges of transformation. The role of the community, the people of Cape Town, is examined in giving the hospital its character and accounting for its achievements, which from its inception has been 'the peoples' hospital'. The experience of 'surgeon princes, nurse nightingales and cleaner cinderellas' has been given due attention, and there is careful effort to reflect the experiences of the millions of patients. Approximately 200 interviews were conducted, eight archival repositories examined and 10 seminars conducted with key witnesses of the hospital's past.

Reading *At the Heart of Healing* one gets the impression at times that GSH continued for much of its first 70 years somewhat cut off from the mainstream events of South African and African history – the civil unrest, the endemic violence, protest, radical disruption, political interference with staff, and changes in the medical politic. Moreover, academic hospitals throughout the world had been profoundly influenced by the seminal report on medical education in the USA and Canada by Abraham Flexner in 1910 and by the progressive evolution of scientific medicine, health services and public health throughout the 20th century. The hospital did, in its search for excellence and international competitiveness, function somewhat in a cocoon, and the book itself has fallen short of meeting such far-reaching expectations. A modern history of South African medicine would be required – that falls beyond the capacity of this already monumental effort.

The authors believe that they have given a 'rounded and balanced account of a multifaceted, complex and distinguished institution'. They have done so, brilliantly, contributing substantially to an understanding of modern South African medical history.

#### Peter Folb

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## Genes for Teens

By Nonhlanhla Khumalo. Pp.94. Illustrated. Yigugu Publishers, Cape Town. 2009. ISBN 978-0-62-041012-0.

*Genes for Teens* is a remarkable book. Nonhlanhla Khumalo conveys a lot of valuable information about genes and genetics, about human reproduction and the danger of infectious diseases, such as AIDS, and about the futility of defining human races by the colour of their skin. (Why not by the shape of their earlobes?) Dr Khumalo writes clearly in an engaging, light-hearted style, and with a pervasive touch of humour. Her style will be quite attractive to teenagers, who are the reading population she targets. The illustrations, all in colour, are lively, beautiful and informative. If my children were now teenagers (rather than the overgrown adults that they are), I would surely give them *Genes for Teens* to read, and I am sure they would love it and thank me for it – and they would have learned a lot about genetics and other biology, without being aware of how much they had learned. A wonderful little book!

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