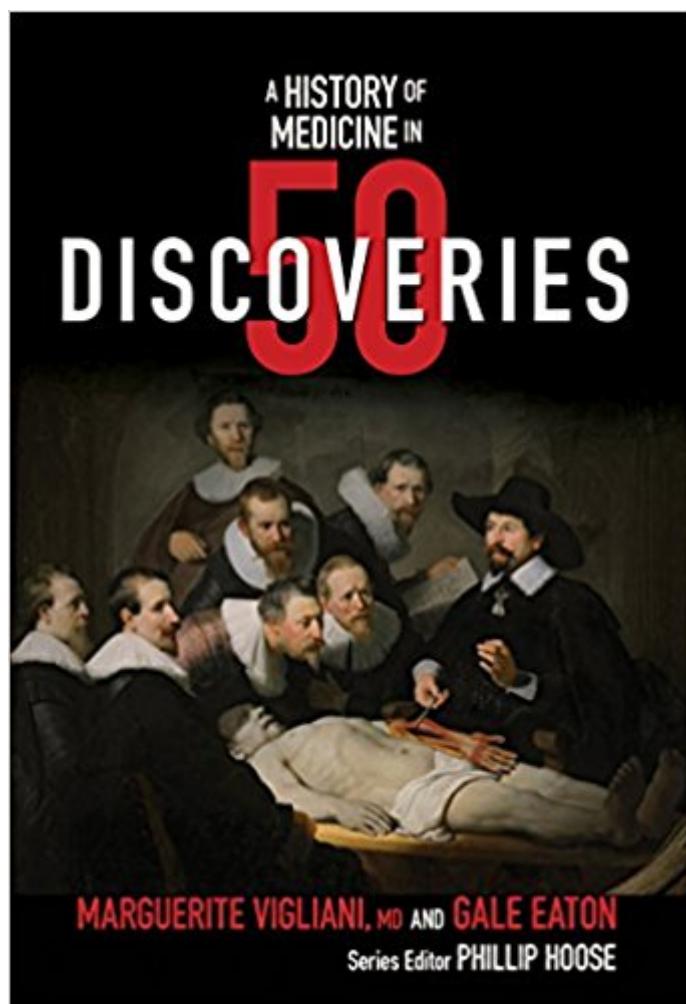


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# A History Of Medicine In 50 Discoveries (History In 50)



## Synopsis

Vigliani and Eatonâ™s high-interest exploration of medicine begins in prehistory. The 5,000-year-old Iceman discovered frozen in the Alps may have treated his gallstones, Lyme disease, and hardening of the arteries with the 61 tattoos that covered his bodyâ•most of which matched acupuncture pointsâ•and the walnut-sized pieces of fungus he carried on his belt. The herbal medicines chamomile and yarrow have been found on 50,000-year-old teeth, and neatly bored holes in prehistoric skulls show that Neolithic surgeons relieved pressure on the brain (or attempted to release evil spirits) at least 10,000 years ago. From Mesopotamian pharmaceuticals and Ancient Greek sleep therapy through midwifery, amputation, bloodletting, Renaissance anatomy, bubonic plague, and cholera to the discovery of germs, X-rays, DNA-based treatments and modern prosthetics, the history of medicine is a wild ride through the history of humankind. Color throughout

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

âœ Marguerite Vigliani, MD, distinguished Rhode Island obstetrician gynecologist, and Clinical Professor at the Alpert Medical School of Brown University, has published, with co-author, Gale Eaton, retired professor of childrenâ™s literature in the University of Rhode Islandâ™s graduate school of library and information services, a beautiful book on the history of medicine. In this era of Kindle, e-books and e-magazines, it is a joy to hold in oneâ™s hands a book that not only feels good, with a significant heft to it, but is beautiful to look at, with pleasing print format, wonderful

layout, shiny cover and gorgeous illustrations. It is a history of medicine for middle and high school students, part of a series intended to grab kids' attention by focusing on 50 exciting stories in history, in this case, the history of medicine. Of course there can not be a consensus on the 50 most important or the 50 most exciting stories, just as there can't be universal agreement on who should win a Nobel prize each year, but these are wonderful stories. I must admit up front that Marguerite is an old friend, who delivered two of my children, so that my review may be a tad short of objective, but this is Rhode Island, where there are way less than 6 degrees of separation. Marguerite thought that since I'm a neurologist I'd be most interested in the story on trephining, which traced the history of the practice, seen in skulls of people who had survived for many years after the procedure. But I actually liked best the story about Calmette, an early immunologist who will forever be linked with the BCG inoculation against tuberculosis. He was interested in developing an anti-snake venom treatment and was able, in 1894 to purchase a barrel full of cobras from India. As an ardent believer in the balance between evidence and experience based medicine I was taken by the story of al-Razi, a legendary Persian physician in the late 800's, who apparently published early, if not the earliest, controlled clinical trials. One demonstrated that epileptics who received sneeze therapy had fewer seizures than those who did not, and that bleeding reduced symptoms of presumed meningitis, compared to controls who were not bled. So much for evidenced based medicine. We learn that Leonardo da Vinci lingered by an elderly dying man to perform a dissection as soon as possible. DNA, blood circulation, the discovery of penicillin and 40+ more topics are cleverly discussed, in a straightforward and engaging manner, that encourages the reader to think about the larger issues associated with each of these 50 medical advances. This will make a great Christmas present for middle school and high school students who might need a little encouragement to learn more about medicine and its history. - RI Med J

Marguerite Vigliani, MD (Barrington, RI) is Clinical Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Warren Alpert Medical School at Brown University. She has been a private solo OB/GYN practitioner for the last 36 years in Rhode Island, where she lives with her family. She has authored a number of medical case reports and clinical opinions for peer-reviewed journals, and she has taught medical students, residents, and fellows in OB/GYN. Gale Eaton has spent a lifetime with books for children and young adults, first as a children's librarian at the Boston Public Library and the Berkshire Athenaeum, and later as a professor of children's literature at the University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Library and Information Studies. She is the author of four other

books. Phillip Hoose is the widely acclaimed author of books, essays, stories, songs, and articles including the National Book Award - and Newbery Honor - winning book *Claudette Colvin: Twice toward Justice* and the *Boston Globe-Horn Book* Honor winner *The Boys Who Challenged Hitler: Knud Pedersen and the Churchill Club*. A graduate of Indiana University and the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Sciences, Hoose was for 37 years a staff member of The Nature Conservancy, dedicated to preserving the plants, animals, and natural communities of the Earth.

Jam-packed with interesting and (for me) amazingly enlightening information, this book is one that should appeal to anyone with even the slightest interest in the convoluted ways our civilization has advanced (and is still advancing) when it comes to the treatment of various illnesses. Even today, especially in underdeveloped sections of the world, there is a certain amount of resistance to new findings, justifiable in some cases, but often frustrating when the resistance occasionally stems from an adherence to outdated practices that were, in one way or another, sanctioned by those whose religious beliefs were their primary concern. I found it quite disconcerting to learn that George Washington lost 80 ounces of blood just before his death due to the belief on the part of the doctor in attendance that bloodletting, at that time, was a valid remedy for many afflictions. Many of us probably take much for granted nowadays. Have a headache? Take an aspirin. Need surgery? Unbearable pain need not be a major concern, thanks to anesthesia. I strongly recommend this book to anyone with the least amount of interest or curiosity in the history of medicine throughout the ages. The appealing, accessible writing style is a major plus as well.

I bought this book and read it straight through. Now I also use it as a reference book, especially because of its extensive reference list. I recommend it for anyone interested in medicine and definitely for use in courses on the history of medicine at the high school or undergrad level. It is engaging and makes learning about the history of medicine fun. I love the illustrations!

Great read, packed full of interesting and at times disgusting facts about medicine! As a nurse I found it fascinating to learn about the discoveries and experiments. It is obvious that meticulous research has been done for this book, yet it isn't boring at all; the author's sense of humour definitely comes across in the writing.

This is a fascinating book, well written and well worth having!

First, I know both authors, and I am a medical librarian. I purchased a copy for myself, and liked it enough that I purchased an additional copy, to donate to my hospital library. Their knowledge, research, and sense of humor show through the book. The glossary is four pages long, the list of sources is twenty-eight pages, and the endnotes are an additional nineteen pages. The book has an index!, that is six pages long. The writing styles will keep you interested in the book. For all that I buy from , this is probably only my second review, and I can simply say that the book is a worthwhile purchase. If you have an interest in the subject, I would encourage you to buy the book.

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