

# Hektoen International: A Journal of Medical Humanities

Edited by George Dunea, M.D. Chicago, Illinois (published quarterly). ISSN 2155-3017. Price: Free online subscription.

Imagine this. You just completed a very full week of sometimes stressful activities navigated by anesthesiologists. Day after day, you provided high-acuity operating room anesthesia or intensive care unit patient care. Simultaneously you taught these patient care activities to trainees, your future colleagues. Having more than care and education to tap your efforts, you plowed forward with research activities, crafted manuscripts for submission, and negotiated administrative land mines. To cap off such an industrious week, you believe you must read one of the numerous available professional journals to stay current.

Now you have to solve the dilemma of which journal to select. Your problem stems from the reality that medical publishing has grown exponentially. More than 30,000 "...active scholarly peer-reviewed English-language journals in mid2018...[are] collectively publishing greater than 3 million articles a year... [with] 11,811...fully open access journals listed on the Directory of Open Access Journals."<sup>1</sup> These numbers, which have undoubtedly grown since the 2018 report, boggle the mind! What to do?

From the myriad of available publications, *Hektoen International: A Journal of Medical Humanities*<sup>2</sup> might be an ideal choice. *Hektoen International* is most likely an unknown to you. Because of your unfamiliarity with *Hektoen International*, this review is intended to address this privation and whet your appetite for a different publication that will expand your knowledge, cater to your personal interests in addition to anesthesiology practice, and offer some entertaining and life-expanding topics that break the stronghold of intense research-based journals.

The National Institutes of Health (Bethesda, Maryland) article "The Origin of NIH Medical Research Grants," published in *Hektoen International*,<sup>3</sup> concisely described this relatively unknown journal:

*Hektoen International* was founded in 2008 by the non-profit Hektoen Institute of Medicine [Chicago, Illinois] with the goal of "bringing culture into medicine and exposing health care professionals to art, ethics, literature, history, anthropology, literature, philosophy, religion and sociology"... Readers include physicians, nurses, administrators and pharmacists in most countries of the world, primarily the United States, England and Australia, and also other parts of Europe, Russia, Asia and Africa.<sup>4</sup>

*Hektoen International* is comprised of 40 sections that include and are not limited to such topics as "Moments in History—Vignettes," "Education," "Hospitals of Note," "Surgery," and "Women in Medicine." Articles in these sections provide glimpses of unusually described and detailed topics. A few examples will expose *Hektoen's* appeal.

Are you a music aficionado? Consider music and how it relates to health care. Vincent de Luise's "Euterpe Deconstructed: Reflections on the Health, Illness, and Legacy of Wolfgang Mozart"<sup>5</sup> discusses this musical wizard and how his medical status influenced his genius.

Are you an avid reader? Consider important authors and whether their medical maladies influenced their writing. Lea Mendes explores the obsessive compulsive disorder, depression, and dyslexia of Charles Dickens in "The Medical Journey of Charles Dickens."<sup>6</sup> Mendes also highlights the illnesses about which Dickens wrote including drunkenness, mesmerism (anesthesiologists certainly employ hypnotic techniques as they care for patients), "...tuberculosis, chronic bronchitis, asthma, restless leg syndrome, Parkinson's disease, chorea, Tourette's syndrome, cerebellar ataxia, torticollis, supranuclear palsy, stroke, epilepsy..."<sup>6</sup>

Do you unwind viewing competitive sports? Consider soccer. Krzysz Stachak, "an accountant, consultant, adventurer, and student of the world," broadens our understanding of "Achilles and His Famous Tendon."<sup>7</sup> Next time you anesthetize an athlete with a torn Achilles tendon, you will know more about Greek mythology and how the hero of *The Iliad* sustained this debilitating injury.

Do medical curiosities fascinate you? Consider conjoined twins. Howard Fischer's *Hektoen* essay, "Dr. Doyen Separates Conjoined Twins in 1902,"<sup>8</sup> describes a surgical separation that predates, by more than 65 yr, the modern era of such feats. This article expands the knowledge of this complicated surgery that modern pediatric anesthesiology practice has experienced with increasing frequency and success since the 1970s.

Is the inevitable aging process of personal interest? Consider geriatric care. George Dunea's *Hektoen International* discussion recounts "The Medical History of Ronald Reagan."<sup>9</sup> It details more about the maladies of the President than were known by most during his political career. In light of current events, this *Hektoen* article has relevance.

Do the modern-day viewpoints surrounding diversity, gender, and race have an impact upon your life? Consider

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women in medicine. Katie King's *Hektoen* essay, "Mary Josephine Hannan: Portrait of a Pioneer,"<sup>10</sup> portrays the struggles and successes of this female medical pioneer. Mary Hannan was a staunch advocate for public health measures that especially benefitted women and children.

*Hektoen International* also includes an archives section in which meaningful quotations and numerous resource links expand the articles and enlighten readers.

When there are "too many" journals upon which your eyes can wander, turn to an alternative by entering your free subscription request<sup>11</sup> and peruse *Hektoen International*. When you browse *Hektoen*, you will not only expand your horizons but also gain a new understanding both of topics of interest to you and of those that your multidimensional patient population may know about. This will give you entrée to engage in meaningful conversation with your charges to divert their attention from the anxiety of their treatment.

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