Jeffrey P Baker MD PhD  
Handout accompanying PAS Workshop, “Teaching History of Medicine on the Wards”  
April 30, 2012

Overviews of Pediatric History


Dedicated to the Health of All Children Edited by Howard A. Pearson, MD, FAAP and Jeffrey P. Baker, MD, FAAP (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2005)  *A professional history of the American Academy of Pediatrics and its role in improving child health, narrated in the first person by participants.*

Formative Years: Children’s Health in the United States, 1880-2000, ed. Alexandra Minna Stern and Howard Markel (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2002)  *An excellent collection of articles by leading pediatric historians, many of whom are also clinicians.*

For a full bibliography on pediatrics history, see the “resources” link at the AAP Pediatric History Center website, [http://www2.aap.org/pediatrichistorycenter](http://www2.aap.org/pediatrichistorycenter)

Teaching Strategies:

**Diseases:** The diseases we don’t see are integral to a student’s education in pediatrics… along with understanding why they are gone. Some will only be encountered in learning the corresponding vaccine (ie, diphtheria); others arise as “serological” diseases, diagnosed by laboratory exams such as the RPR in congenital syphilis. Consider sending a student to the library, and look up a disease in a pediatrics textbook from 50-100 years ago. Many libraries will still have retained some of their early texts (though they may be off site!). You may even want to buy one of your own, on line or through a used book store. Textbook articles can be used to talk about the disease itself, as well as how it was treated and prevented.

L. Emmett Holt,  *The Diseases of Infancy and Childhood*  (1897)  *Many subsequent editions; the textbook that in many ways launched American pediatrics*


**Breakthroughs and Turning Points:** The challenge here is not so much finding books (see the PHC website bibliography), but short articles that can be assigned to a student. There are two resources here:

One is the *Historical Perspectives* feature of Pediatrics. Recent articles have addressed topics such as sulfa antibiotics, newborn screening, measles vaccine, and autism. They can be searched in Pediatrics, and are also posted on the AAP Pediatric History Center Website.


There are many good books describing great “breakthroughs” in medicine, but none focus on pediatrics. One of the best is *Great Discoveries in Medicine*, ed. William and Helen Bynum. (London: Thames and Hudson, 2011.)

**Disasters and Medical Errors:**

Thymic irradiation: Jacobs MT, Frush DP, Donnelly LF. The right place at the wrong time: Historical perspective of the radiation of the thymus gland and pediatric radiology. *Radiology* 1999; 210: 11-16


Contaminated polio vaccine: Paul Offit, *The Cutter Incident*

**Professionalism:** Besides the general histories in the bibliography, see:

Russell Viner. Politics, power, and pediatrics. *Lancet* 1999; 353: 232-4. (On Abraham Jacobi; also see Viner’s excellent article in Formative Years, listed in bibliography)
