

## The Concealed Revealed: Searching for the Hidden Lymph Node

**S. David Nathanson**

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*The medical memoir The Concealed Revealed covers a doctor's pursuit to identify the lymph nodes responsible for cancer metastasis.*

S. David Nathanson's medical memoir *The Concealed Revealed* concerns the discovery of a lymph node responsible for some cancers.

Nathanson was eleven years old when, during a serendipitous stroll through the public library, an anatomy book caught his eye and he learned about the lymphatic system. Later, his grandmother's cancer diagnosis, and his experiences of treating patients with lymphedema, cemented his resolution to study tumor immunology and prevent lymphedema in cancer patients. His interest in research and lab experiments strengthened and supported this labor.

Nathanson's growing interest in lymph is meticulously chronicled. The process is shown to have been a lengthy one, spanning decades and involving multiple influences; the most consistent and noteworthy influences were the cancer patients who were negatively impacted by the removal of all of the lymph nodes in the areas surrounding their tumors. Though once common practice, this technique turned out to be often unnecessary, though examinations could only be made after extraction. This led Nathanson to wonder whether cancerous lymph nodes could be identified in advance, eliminating the need to extract healthy ones. He worked to find the lymph node responsible for cancer metastasis, primarily in breast cancer and melanoma.

With the constant thread of Nathanson's fascination with experiments, dating back to childhood pursuits of hobbies like photography, the book foreshadows his future medical pursuits. The tone is enthusiastic and exuberant, especially during such descriptions. The language becomes precise when describing medical procedures and research, though it keeps laypeople in mind. Its explanations of science are somewhat more obscure, though the value of Nathanson's experiments is made clear and understandable, thanks to an early explanation of the repercussions of lymphedema.

While the book invokes emotions like mournfulness and triumph well in Nathanson's expressed regrets for the patients who could not benefit from his later discoveries, these reflections temper the joy of Nathanson's eventual success, as does the book's occasional long-windedness. Its run-on sentences and erratic punctuation sometimes make it hard to follow; and an offensive descriptor is present, used to reference people of color. Still, a sense of excitement runs beneath every successful experiment, breakthrough, and subsequent discovery.

The medical memoir *The Concealed Revealed* covers a doctor's pursuit to identify the lymph nodes responsible for cancer metastasis.

CAROLINA CIUCCI (August 7, 2021)

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