

The Medical Jungle: A Pioneering Surgeon's Battle to Revolutionize Vascular Care and Challenge the Medical Mafia

Frank J. Veith

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The Medical Jungle is a stimulating memoir about a vascular surgeon's envelope-pushing work in his field.

Vascular surgeon Frank J. Veith's *The Medical Jungle* is an intriguing memoir about his contributions to the medical field.

Veith toed the line as a medical student and as a surgical resident. As his abilities grew and he gained experience and confidence, though, he began to advocate for procedures and surgeries that went against accepted medical knowledge, from lung transplants to endovascular surgery. His efforts were often dismissed and resisted. His attempts to make vascular surgery a certified specialty were the last straw: Veith was fired from his hospital position after several decades of work.

The chapters are topical, covering Veith's standout accomplishments and campaigns. These include his work with lung transplants and endovascular surgery, but also experimental techniques to save limbs and his spearheading of the VEITHsymposium, an annual event where vascular surgeons and other specialists gather to learn about the latest advances in the field. Collectively, these chapters impart a sense of how much medicine has advanced in the past few decades. Veith embellishes them further with accounts of the frustrations he encountered, including around the resistance of the medical establishment to change. He attributes these habits to greed and ego and argues that they run counter to concerns for patients' welfare.

However, Veith makes some tone-deaf claims in the course of his work, as when he compares leaving a toxic job to escaping the gulag. He recalls pretending that nothing happened when one coworker used a slur against another; he details coups in Asian countries in terms that make them seem exciting, ignoring their harder implications. Additionally, considerable portions of the book are devoted to detailing Veith's procedures and surgeries. While these descriptive passages suggest the importance and comparative advantages of such work, their language is too technical to invite lay readers in.

The book deviates from its established track near its end with a chapter that is devoted to mentorship—what qualifies a person to be a mentor; what traits and skills they should promote; a list of essential characteristics for mentors to cultivate. And the last last quarter of the book is devoted to compiling Veith's papers and speeches, whose specialized language holds audiences at a distance. Still, *The Medical Jungle* is an often stimulating memoir about a vascular surgeon's envelope-pushing work in his field.

CAROLINA CIUCCI (December 7, 2022)

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