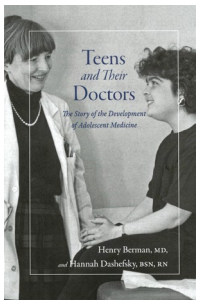
Defining the often-misunderstood specialty of adolescent medicine

Teens and their doctors. The story of the development of adolescent medicine

Berman H, Dashefsky H
Science History Publications, USA; 2017
(US$25.95; 326 pp)
ISBN 9780881353921



For most medical specialties, evolution of practice has come through scientific advancement, the discovery of new medications, or technologies capable of improving diagnosis or management. In adolescent medicine, development has occurred primarily in response to changes in society. Since 1951, when J Roswell Gallagher established the first adolescent medicine unit at the Boston Children's Hospital, social change has seen growth in opportunities for women, increasing sexual freedom, information access, and globalisation with the creation of the internet. Clinicians providing care for adolescents have needed to develop specialised interdisciplinary skills to manage the complex medical, developmental and psychosocial issues presenting in these changing times. From treating sexually transmitted infections, unintended pregnancy, substance use, accidents and violence to more recent growth in chronic illness, mental health disorders, eating disorders and provision of medical care to transgender and gender diverse youth.

For nearly 50 years, Henry Berman has been at the forefront of this evolution, practising adolescent medicine as a clinical professor of paediatrics at the University of Washington. He was pivotal in developing the HEADSS screening tool — an internationally accepted and widely used instrument for clinicians to explore a young person's psychosocial circumstances. In conjunction with Hannah Dashefsky, through interviews with over 80 adolescent medicine specialists, including the pioneers and leaders from Australia, he has created a story of our profession through the eyes of the clinicians themselves and those they have influenced. We get to know their characters and the complex role they have played in caring and advocating for this often-neglected and vulnerable population.

Teens and their doctors aims to further define this relatively new and often-misunderstood specialty. Through recollections of clinician–patient interactions and significant events, such as the establishment of the Society for Adolescent Medicine in 1968 (now known as the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine) and its official publication (the *Journal of Adolescent Health*) in 1980, this book will be enjoyed by adolescent medicine specialists and those who are interested in becoming one.

Competing interests: No relevant disclosures. ■

© 2019 AMPCo Pty Ltd

Michelle M Telfer

Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne, VIC.

Michelle.Telfer@rch.org.au

doi: 10.5694/mja2.50200