



Dropsy, Dialysis, Transplant: A Short History of Failing Kidneys (Johns Hopkins Biographies of Disease)

Steven J. Peitzman

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Small and bean shaped, the kidneys are sophisticated organs that filter waste from the blood. A number of diseases and disorders—including diabetes and hypertension—can harm the kidneys and cause them to fail.

Historian and nephrologist Steven J. Peitzman traces the medical history of kidney disease alongside the personal experience of illness. Drawing on diaries, letters, literary narratives, and scientific writings, Peitzman charts the triumphs of medical innovators like Richard Bright, Thomas Addis, and Belding Scribner as well as the stories of persons, famous and not, who have struggled with the disease.

Conditions once known as "Bright's Disease" are now recognized as complex disorders with names such as glomerulopathy and acute tubular necrosis. Treatments have evolved from abdominal tapping and dietetics to hemodialysis and transplantation. Medical advances have improved the well-being and prognosis of persons with failing kidneys. Yet such persons continue on an arduous journey of chronic illness. Peitzman travels with them, from diagnosis to treatment, and witnesses their remarkable ability to cope.

Joining the clinician's perspective with the historian's analysis, this fascinating chronicle offers insight into how diseases are defined, categorized, and understood and explains current concepts of how kidney disease behaves and how modern therapy works.

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