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# “Woke Under Anesthesia”

*Misconceptions about medical treatments in the USA*

# By

# Tondalah Stroud

*This book reveals a hospital scandal at one of America's leading hospitals and how my loved one escaped death after a mixture of medical errors and complications that were covered up.*

*This book aims to help identify and provide life saving strategies when patients are challenged with medical negligence, socioeconomic, racial, or implicit biases while seeking medical treatment.*

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# Forward

# Introduction

In this book, as the story unfolds, we follow the journey of a daughter who exposes a hospital's cover-up. We also learn how socioeconomic biases influenced the post-operational care her mother received after several medical mishaps that left her near death. This story is based on actual events; names have been modified to protect their privacy. In the book, the 51-year-old daughter of a 68-year-old African American mother describes how she was in a race against time to save her mother's life while fighting against a medical institution's covert actions to cover up the truth after her mother underwent a routine surgical procedure to replace her heart valve. The story is of faith, love, and ingenuity, set against death-defying suspense. It is the story of the daughter's quest for answers after a cover-up of the botched surgery where she had to remain in the ICU for seventy-two days, fighting for her life with a 10% left ventricular ejection fraction (LVEF). She did not know where to turn for help or how to navigate the bureaucracy. She was up against a medical institution giant with the power to conceal, cover-up, or reconstruct the truth to suit its narrative. After realizing her mom was about to die, she sought legal and professional assistance to help her advocate without success. She quickly realized the medical institution had the backing of a powerful government as its enabler. This was done by enacting revised malpractice laws the governor had previously passed on their behalf. She felt alone and afraid and did not know what to do, that is until she connected with a former medical student who knew exactly what to do to help.

[Chapter 1] The Misconceptions about Doctors

Finding A Doctor (*Her Relocating and looking for A heart doctor)(the intent is to tell a story)*

My mother was moving to Texas, where I had recently relocated, and I eagerly anticipated her arrival. We had lived in Chicago all my life, so being in another big city and having my mother join us was exciting. My husband and I were now located in the Dallas, Fort Worth metroplex. Not long after being in Dallas, I was finally off all of my medication. I had spent 18 years suffering from several debilitating autoimmune diseases such as multisystemic Sarcoidosis, Lupus, Hashimoto, and Sjrogens. While in Chicago, I had also been diagnosed with chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia, pulmonary hypertension, and uveitis. At one point, during a two-week stay in the hospital, I was advised that my next course of action was to get on the transplant list for a double lung transplant, boy I am glad I did not follow those instructions.

I spent nearly eighteen years on steroids, chemo, and numerous immunosuppressants such as Cellcept, Plaquenile, Remicade, methotrexate, prednisone, Actonol, and Immuron, to name a few. One would think that the move to Texas appeared to be the driving force behind improving my multiple conditions. Yes, I admit the relocation was strategic because I knew sun exposure significantly affected my overall health, and it was also crucial to be out of Chicago's brutally cold temperatures. However, I understood that my miraculous recovery was attributed to a variety of factors. During my last three years in Chicago, after mentioning to a friend the challenges I was having with my health, she told me to try her doctor because her sister had lupus and had been bedridden. Her sister was able to have an active life again after her new doctor was instrumental in helping her autoimmune disease to be in remission. She mentioned several others she knew seemed to have had great success under his care. She explained he wasn't like the traditional doctors; he was an integrative medicine doctor. She warned me to be patient because he takes a lot of time with his patients, so getting in with him will take some time, but it will be worth it once I start with him. In my ignorance, not knowing what an integrative medicine doctor was, I thought perhaps he could be some doctor who practiced medicine and some weird home remedies stuff also.

Nevertheless, after hearing I might need a double lung transplant, it was worth going to find out what he could do since he had proven results. I was willing to try almost anything to get better. After arriving at his practice in Scherville, Indiana, and examining everything and everyone there, including the patients, everything and everyone seemed normal, so I let my spooky weird scientist guard down, and my anticipation of how he could help me grew. On my first visit, he spent over an hour with me, and when our visit ended, he said, "Although you have a lot going on, don't worry; I am going to take great care of you." He then said, "You are going to be okay." I felt relieved; he seemed to care what had happened to me. After a few subsequent visits, I became confused. I thought to myself, wait, I didn't understand; he pulled blood tests I had never heard of or received while I was at the top research Hospitals in Chicago, and he also discovered I had more than I had previously been diagnosed with. The diagnosis finally matched my symptoms. You mean I wasn't crazy when I continuously stressed the severity of my fatigue and was told by one doctor that not any of his other sarcoidosis patients experienced it. Dr. Nchuckwube educated me about the inflammation raging in my body and the things my body was likely rejecting. Over time, we built a tremendous doctor-patient relationship, and for the first time, I felt I was now in the driver's seat for my health, participating in my care with understanding and tools to help me fight. I was no longer just a patient waiting to hear the eight to fifteen minutes health update that resulted in being sent home worried and with yet another prescription that sometimes did more harm than the actual disease itself.

Dr. Nchuckwube was the doctor who didn't just prescribe medicine but also healthy nutritional, physical, and mental lifestyle changes, along with vitamins, and supplement recommendations. I tried to tell everybody about him and his practice. When I would attempt to explain how he was a great integrative medicine doctor who treated the root of the problem and didn't just hand out prescriptions to treat every ailment, they looked at me like I had three aliens on my head. I thought to myself, they are thinking the same thing I was thinking because they don't understand and are not desperate enough like I was.

He helped me learn a lot about being more educated and proactive in my medical care, enabling my future care team to better help me. I learned about my food intake and various non traditonal, more specialized blood tests that I had never received while a patient at some of the top hospitals in Chicago. That is not to say that they did something wrong, but they just did things differently, and unfortunately those differences did not help me to get in remission and have the ability to get off of the multitude of medications. Aside from that, I also learned that family practice/internal medicine doctors are divided into different types, and some of them, such as integrative medicine doctors, require additional education and certification to function within that specialty hence the reason for the major differnce in treatment styles between my doctors. By the time I left Chicago, my health was improving significantly. I was off nearly all of my major medications. Although I wanted to stay with Dr. Nchuckwube as my physician, I knew that was impossible. However, through my experience with him, I was equipped to look for great doctors in my new area. With everything I learned during my eighteen-year health battle, I extensively researched the physicians in Dallas that I wanted to treat me. With that I was able to pick up where I left off in my medical care while in Chicago and I have seen some great doctors thus far.

  On the other hand, my mother, a healthy 67-year-old black female, relocated to Texas and was one that followed a more traditional medical treatment path as most Americans do. In September 2020, she decided to relocate and join us in Texas. After she arrived, we had a great time enjoying our new pool and the outdoor family barbecues in our new Texas backyard paradise. Covid-19 came and went. When we weren't having backyard fun together, she was isolated at her home while we were at ours. We made it through; she didn't get sick with COVID, although I can't say the same for us. She decided that since she had spent most of her time in the house, practiced the CDC's precautions, and had not caught COVID, she would not go out to get the vaccine yet.

     In May of 2021, not long after she relocated and the world was getting some fluid movement through the Covid crisis, she became severely ill and had what seemed to be severe stomach pain. I had to rush her to the hospital. Before relocating, she had been tested for heart problems since she was being treated for high blood pressure. No significant issues were found; therefore, w**e did not have any idea what possibly could have been wrong. Because we were still relatively new to the area,**I did not know where I should take her**to our area; this wasn't something I definitely had not researched.** I wanted her to visit the nearest emergency room or urgent care cente**r.** I searched for nearby emergency rooms and urgent care centers, saw a familiar name of one of the biggest hospitals in Texas, and made my way to them. Upon entering and waiting, I thought it seemed slightly rundown, and the front staff seemed uncaring and unprofessional. I shrugged it off, knowing she would only be there briefly. After running a series of tests, they determined that her gallbladder needed to be removed, but to receive a bed at their primary hospital, she would have to wait three to four days. They strongly suggested we drive her somewhere else that could take her in right away. Since she would need surgery, I decided to take her to one of the hospitals where I was being treated, and I knew it was considered the best. She was having severe pain, and after we arrived, they admitted her immediately and performed the procedure to remove her gallbladder. I waited patiently for her name to come up on the patient's surgical board and show that she was in recovery. Finally, she was in recovery, and they came to tell me that the surgery was successful.

I was so relieved and happy, and they finally allowed me in the room to see her. She had a smile on her face and looked bright, and she was glad that she was no longer in pain. Just as they were about to release her to come home, she turned over to me and said she was having trouble breathing. The doctors rushed in and started performing many tests to figure out what was wrong. They spoke to me and said everything looked fine, but they couldn't figure out why she was having trouble breathing. They kept her for a few more days, and then the next thing I knew, I was introduced to a heart surgeon. The heart doctor told her she needed to have heart surgery soon to replace her mitral valve. Hmm, this sounded like heart surgery to me. It sounded serious; I really didn't know what to make of it. Well, she didn't have a heart doctor here in Texas, so the heart doctor she met after her surgery would now become her new Doctor to perform the procedure. He made it sound like it was easy, like it was going to be in and out. He said she would be out of the hospital within seven days Max and that it was a very common and invasive surgery. He spoke of his specialty and that he was the number one doctor in Texas to do this procedure and the only doctor skilled at utilizing this robotic machine to do the surgery. My mother agreed to go ahead and plan to have the surgery. I was out of town on the day she scheduled the meeting with the surgeon. I thought nothing of it; I figured she had a good handle. She was non-disabled, had a strong mind, and could make the decision for herself on whether or not she wanted to use him or continue with the procedure. I figured she would return and give me all of my instructions and everything I needed to do to support her. She knew I was fully supportive of whatever decision she made. The next thing I knew, she texted me and told me I needed to take her to the hospital and that her surgery would be on a particular day. It was at that point that I became anxious. I started to feel hesitant. I wasn't sure she should proceed with this procedure, but I didn't have any information to prove otherwise. I didn't know anything about the heart or heart surgery that sounded serious. They said she needed some valve replacement, which sounds serious. But when I looked at her she looked perfectly healthy she wasn't having any problems she seemed to be breathing and walking OK so I didn't know what to think. I felt more comfort knowing she was attending one of the top two hospitals in the Dallas, TX, area. I felt confident that she took the time to research her doctor, and I was satisfied that she was satisfied. She was ready to get this fixed, and they emphasized not waiting until she was older, so she felt good about proceeding. I remember the morning we rode to the hospital; something felt slightly off. I couldn't explain it. As much as I love to worship and love Gospel music, she played the gospel music loud, continuously saying let's pray, there was just something that felt so off. I told her I would pray before the surgery, as I always do, and we rode silently to the hospital, listening to worship music. Something felt like it needed to be more typical and correct. I asked her again Are you sure you want to do this today, and she said yes. Once we made it to the hospital, it took us a minute to find a park because the valet service wasn't open as we expected; therefore, it took us an extra 10 minutes or so to get parked and situated upstairs. That made us about 12 minutes late. When we were supposed to check in for the surgery, there were a lot of people there waiting for surgery as well.

We waited patiently until her name was called to go to the back. I was still uneasy, but I didn't know why. I didn't express it to her; I just made sure I prayed and told her I would be sitting here until the surgery was complete. She was finally placed in her room and told to get undressed. We sat laughing and talking as she waited for the next steps. The nurse came in, and I asked her if she would be the person to explain the directions for how I was to care for her afterward, and she said no, that the Doctor would go over all of that with me. I smiled and said OK. I'll put my head back down, staring into my computer, where I was focused on whatever I was working on. Next the anesthesiologist came in and reviewed everything with her. She had her IV in, and then she would be rolled out for surgery. I waited for the Doctor to come back to ask if there were any questions to make sure I knew what I needed to do for aftercare. The Doctor did precisely what they usually do before most surgeries and asked her if she knew what type of surgery she had, and she responded yes. He said next, she would be taken back for surgery in a few moments, and as he was preparing to leave, he asked if we had any additional questions. I noticed he looked my way while I was heavily deep into my computer, but listening to everything going on, I politely raised my hand and said, "Yes, I have a question." He said sure, go ahead, so I asked him if he would explain how to care for her after or before the surgery. I also requested how long the surgery is going to be. He responded in a sharp tone, "When I finish." I looked a little bewildered when he replied. But I didn't think anything about it. I figured it was just another doctor with poor bedside manners and trying to hurry up and go to surgery. So when he asked his final question, any more questions, I responded again and said ohh, are you going to explain how to take care of her once she's out of surgery? I want to make sure I can do what I need to do for her.

All doctors are not created equal

A common but false perception is that doctors have all the answers, and we can blindly trust everything they say and just follow along with every recommendation or prognoses that is provided. In addition to being human and fallible, it should not be a surprise that they can sometimes be implicitly biased. It is the very reason why it is urgently imperative for patients to become more actively involved in their own healthcare by asking questions, seeking second opinions, and conducting their own research. While it would be great if patients were more participative in the direction of their medical care, it is also equally as important to note that doctors are not all created equally, as they have varying levels of education and specialties. A patient should research the type of doctor that they are planning to see. There are different types of doctors, such as integrative and functional medicine doctors, who offer different types of care. These doctors have a more extensive academic background than traditional medical doctors. It is undeniable that physicians sometimes diagnose patients incorrectly. When deciding in choosing a doctor, it should be understood the major difference in their treatment path can vary significantly and can mean the difference between life saving treatment or death. Also, the treatment path can vary depending on the doctor's experience, training, and overall approach to medicine. Some treatment paths can be more integrative, utilizing various natural and holistic treatments combined with conventional care, while others may be patterned to stick solely to conventional protocols that treat the symptoms through prescription medication only and not necessarily take interest in researching the root cause of the problem beyond what the lab tests indicates.

First let’s examine the foundation of medical practice as it is structured, and we know of today. The practice of medicine is comprised of **Eastern** and **Western medicine**. Eastern medicine sometimes referred to as complementary or alternative medicine (CAM), is one of the oldest systems of medicine in the world, originating from Asia and is not part of standard medical care. It is considered a more holistic mind, body, and spirit approach to diagnosing, treating, and preventing disease, and often includes traditional, Ayurveda, and Chinese medicine. Some of those practices may include tai-chi, acupuncture, yoga, and meditation.

On the other hand, according to the National Cancer Institute, **Western medicine** is known as conventional or modern medicine and refers to the standard care of how medical professionals, treat diseases using medical treatments, such as drugs, radiation, and surgery we commonly see today. Depending upon the type of practitioner see, their approach may also incorporate treating the whole person through complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) also. Wait I thought you said Eastern Medicine practice (CAM) also? Yes, all the various medical approaches can overlap and sometimes be confusing to understand the differences in the approaches. I have included some definitions from the National Cancer Institute that should help provide some clarity regarding the type of medicine practices or approaches to medicine.[[1]](#endnote-1)

* [**Conventional medicine**](https://www.cancer.gov/Common/PopUps/popDefinition.aspx?id=CDR0000449752&version=Patient&language=en)is a system in which health professionals who hold an M.D. (medical doctor) or D.O. (doctor of osteopathy) degree treat symptoms and diseases using drugs, radiation, or surgery. It may also be called Western, mainstream, or [orthodox medicine](https://www.cancer.gov/Common/PopUps/popDefinition.aspx?id=CDR0000454746&version=Patient&language=en). Some conventional medical care practitioners are also practitioners of CAM.
* [**Integrative medicine**](https://www.cancer.gov/Common/PopUps/popDefinition.aspx?id=CDR0000689097&version=Patient&language=en) is an approach to medical care that combines conventional medicine with CAM practices that have shown through science to be safe and effective. This approach often stresses the patient's preferences, and it attempts to address the mental, physical, and spiritual aspects of health.
* **Standard medical care** is treatment that is accepted by medical experts as a proper treatment for a certain type of disease and that is widely used by healthcare professionals to treat symptoms.
* [**Complementary medicine**](https://www.cancer.gov/Common/PopUps/popDefinition.aspx?id=CDR0000044951&version=Patient&language=en) is used along with standard medical treatment but is not considered by itself to be standard treatment such as using [acupuncture](https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/cam/patient/acupuncture-pdq) to help lessen some side effects of other treatments.
* [**Alternative medicine**](https://www.cancer.gov/Common/PopUps/popDefinition.aspx?id=CDR0000044921&version=Patient&language=en) is used instead of standard medical treatment. One example is using a special diet to treat a condition instead of drugs that would normally be prescribed by a physician.
* **Traditional medicine-** according to the World Health Organization as pre-scientific traditional healers, home remedies and ancient medicinal knowledge and includes various systems of traditional medicine such as acupuncture, herbal medicines, indigenous traditional medicine, homeopathy, traditional Chinese medicine, naturopathy, chiropractic, osteopathy, ayurvedic and Unani medicine.Around [40% of pharmaceutical products today](https://www.who.int/initiatives/who-global-centre-for-traditional-medicine) draw from nature and traditional knowledge, including landmark drugs: aspirin, artemisinin, and childhood cancer treatments.

While Eastern and Western Medicine each have various approaches to medical practice within them, we could talk about for days; for the general purpose of this book, we are going to focus on the six types of doctors within Western Medicine, that have passed a standardized board examination, and hold state issued medical licenses from their respective licensing body after having graduated from a four-year graduate level in-residence medical school recognized by the U.S. department of education. This list is comprised of one of the types of medical professionals you have seen or will see at some point in your life.

* Naturopathic doctors (ND or NMD)
* Osteopathic Doctors (DO)
* Integrative & Functional MDs and DOs
* Chiropractic Doctors (DC)
* Conventional MD

Why does it all matter for you?

In conclusion, patients must leave their health journey solely in the hands of the physicians. They should be active in their health journey to enable them the best possible outcome for them.

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Statistics and Data about wrong diagnoses and misdiagnoses

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Important questions to ask once you receive your diagnoses?

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Is the procedure suggested or required now?

Plan for the worse while believing for the best

Power of attorney, Medical Directives, Estate Planning, Passwords

Being admitted to the hospital should be the day the patient plans for the worst while believing for the best outcome.

Many patients are not prepared if their procedure doesn't go as planned and have a power of attorney on file.

Never leave your loved one alone in the medical facility without being prepared to be a fully informed advocate for the patient.

In conclusion, being prepared for the worse possible outcome when being admitted in the hospital possible save your life.

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The Cover Up! (*Her story of hearing while under anestesia that something was wrong LVAD & Impella*)

Who Is Going With You? Don't Just Get A Ride To The Hospital, Get An Advocate.

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Understanding the laws of the state

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Specialty Test to consider

Great Health Monitoring Apps

Medical essientials for home

Hospital Admittance Checklist

Vitamin and Supplement Cheat Sheet

Suggested Daily Supplements

Tips for making the most of doctor visits

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1. https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/cam [↑](#endnote-ref-1)