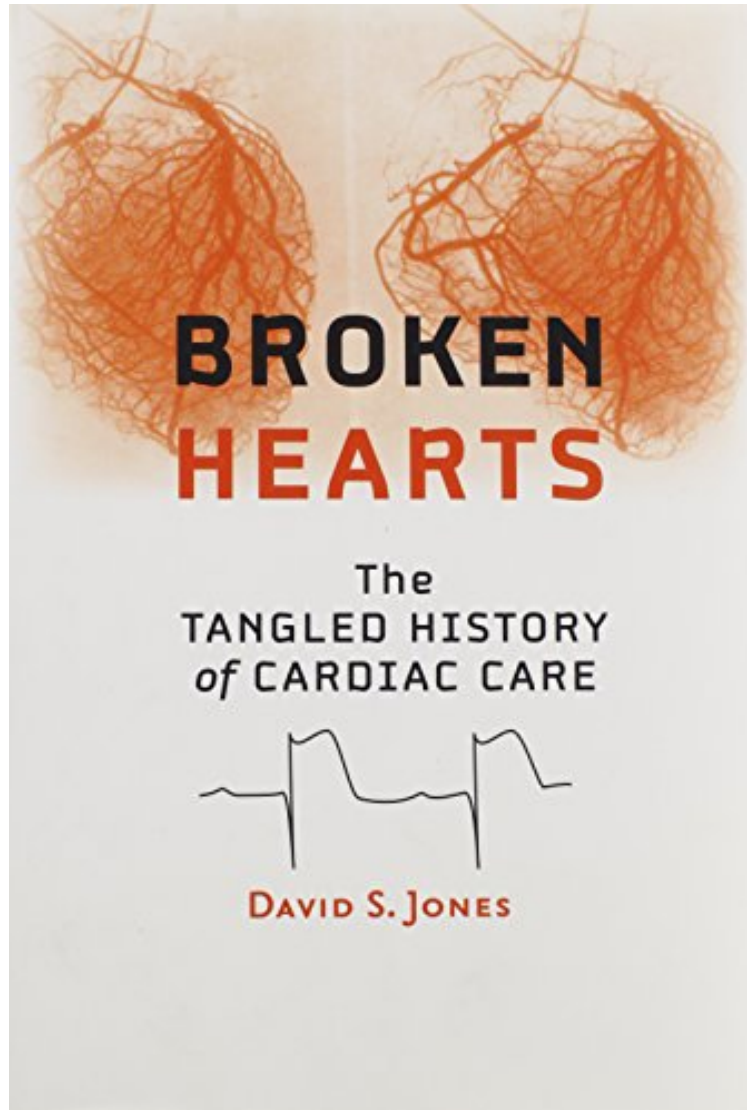


## Broken Hearts: The Tangled History of Cardiac Care

David S. Jones

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**David S. Jones : Broken Hearts: The Tangled History of Cardiac Care** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Broken Hearts: The Tangled History of Cardiac Care:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great information on the evolving understanding of heart attacks By P. Friell I learned a great deal about our evolving understanding of heart attacks from this book. It is well written and well documented. The vested interests in cardiology and industry are explained very well. This book gives a very different explanation of heart attacks than the compelling documentary The Widomaker, which is narrated by Gillian Anderson, which swayed me mightily. Broken Hearts definitely changed my opinion. 3 of 6 people found the

following review helpful. OK, but I hoped for more. By Eric Wolff I purchased this book when I heard that my dad was going to have angioplasty and then he wound up having bypass. I found the history of the procedures very interesting, and I thought the book had some good critiques of the culture surrounding the procedures, both on the medical side and on the patient side. But ultimately the book trails off on social science tangents and vague assertions of discrimination and whatnot that were far afield from assessing whether angioplasty and bypass are a bright idea for anyone. Also, I was disappointed that there wasn't more discussion of the changes in conventional wisdom about why people have heart disease. In particular, some discussion of how America went overboard on low-fat diets and narrow fixation on LDL cholesterol. Given the discussion of statins in the book, I thought there might be a critical appraisal of those issues, but there was not. Could have been an awesome book on an important topic. It isn't. It is a good book on the history of angioplasty and bypass that will help some folks think critically about the procedures.

32 of 32 people found the following review helpful. MY CANDIDATE FOR THE NEXT PULITZER PRIZE IN NONFICTION By Kenneth E. MacWilliams WHAT IS MY CONNECTION TO THIS BOOK -- "BROKEN HEARTS: The Tangled History of Cardiac Care" by David S. Jones, MD, PhD, the A. Bernard Ackerman Professor of the Culture of Medicine at Harvard Medical School? Especially given the title I have selected for this review, I should make clear that I have not been asked by anyone to write this review. Neither have I communicated with anyone about it, nor do I know the author or anyone who knows him. I write this review solely because I hope to persuade as many people as possible to read this exceptionally well researched, beautifully written, and ever so timely and important book. And so that you might have some perspective regarding my own professional background to enable you to evaluate better my remarks herein, my own personal perspective is as follows. I am not a medical doctor. My professional career has been in finance on Wall Street, which I left after 30 years to establish my own financial organization in Russia. Throughout my life I have had a keen interest in medicine in general and in medical history in particular. Truth be known, although Wall Street was a great ride, I probably would have even more enjoyed becoming a physician or surgeon. Nevertheless, I have for many years been involved in different ways in national medical policy issues, and I have served for long periods on the clinical trial review boards of four of the largest and best academic medical centers in the country, during which years I developed personal relationships with some of the best medical scientists in the world. I hope you will therefore conclude that my remarks are independent and objective, and hopefully that they come from a background that provides me with a wee bit of familiarity about the subject of this book.

AN APT COMPARISON: A little over two years ago I wrote an review of Siddhartha Mukherjee's THE EMPEROR OF ALL MALADIES: A BIOGRAPHY OF CANCER which did in fact go on to win the Pulitzer Prize in Nonfiction in 2011. At the time when I wrote that review I thought "Emperor" was the best book of its kind that I had ever read and that I would never see another similar book of the same caliber. I was wrong because I believe BROKEN HEARTS is such a book. These two books are bookends on the top shelf of medical histories and popular yet serious medical stories, encompassing all the rest. EMPEROR is somewhat deeper in the historical aspect, necessarily so, but not by much. BROKEN HEARTS is heavier on the decisional aspects, necessarily so, and from a public policy and personal decision making standpoint it is a bit more immediately useful, but not by much. The research underpinning each is bed rock solid. And they are both exceptionally well organized and splendidly written. (Where do these physicians get off anyway, writing THAT well?) Overall, on a one to ten scale, they are both elevens.

SO WHY READ IT? Beyond its general excellence, why should you be interested in this general topic and this book? Because, statistically speaking, you the reader of this review will be fortunate if heart disease does not someday involve you or your immediate family because heart disease remains the leading cause of death worldwide. Hopefully heart disease will never be a part of your life. But if it is, I promise you that you will be grateful you read this book as you and your family and your physician develop a master plan regarding your treatment and survival strategy. And I personally say that as one who has heart disease, and who has had a heart attack, and who has read this book. My regret is that Dr. Jones did not write this book years ago. It would have helped me tremendously at the time and it again may still, depending upon what fate holds in store for me.

SPECIFICALLY HOW DOES THIS BOOK HELP? BROKEN HEARTS provides you with a brilliant history of the practice of cardiology and of cardiac surgery from the beginning until now. Key players in this development are the history of both coronary artery bypass surgery and of angioplasties. Cardiologists and cardiac surgeons warmly welcomed the arrival of each intervention, providing as they usually did powerful relief from the often extreme physical pain and physiological terror of angina. But whether they increased longevity for non-cardiac arrest patients with general heart disease is another story and Dr. Jones picks that apart carefully, piece by piece. Eventually, as he demonstrates, it became more and more clear that the initial hopes of life extension were not materializing, except with the most seriously ill patients. And these invasive procedures had their own risks of significant adverse events when compared with standard and traditional medical treatments combined with lifestyle changes. Yet both procedures grew very rapidly in usage and popularity. Again brilliantly, Dr. Jones unbundles the reasons for their rapid growth and in the process so very much is illuminated about medical decision making along with some of its obvious as well as its not-so-obvious inherent biases. Dr. Jones then uses all of this as a platform on which to build his broad conclusions regarding the theory and practice of modern medicine in general, how the medical culture operates, how decisions are often made by physicians and surgeons, on what they focus most

heavily when making those decisions, where and when such decision making is valid and when it is not, and how sometimes in this overall process cardiologists and cardiac surgeons inadvertently mislead themselves, their patients, and society in general. To be able to see the ambiguities and inherent biases in such medical decision making, and especially regarding some aspects of cardiology and cardiac surgery, Dr. Jones must take us into the roadside weeds. But fear not when I say that, because he leads us through them clearly, thoroughly, easily, and painlessly. In doing all of this Dr. Jones provides you with an overall strategy for your and your physician's decision making should you or your closest loved ones ever be confronted with heart disease. He also clearly delineates the implications and costs to the medical profession of some of its somewhat biased decision making models. Finally, the implications to the general community and to public health in general, and especially to the public cost of treatment, are examined in the same clear-eyed fashion and in an eminently balanced manner. THAT sounds pretty scholarly and white-paperish and analytical and maybe even boring. But it is NOT. This book is absolutely the antithesis of boring. It is quite possibly a peek into your own future and if that is to be the case it talks to you about how your probable treatment options got to where they are today and how you can yourself manage that information to your own best advantage. And given that Dr. Jones does this in such a balanced manner, we can take for granted that he and *BROKEN HEARTS* will likely be shot at from ALL public quarters. That, when you think about it, is about the best testimonial this book can get. The honesty and integrity and skill of his analytical scalpel ranges and touches widely and cuts away much that is dysfunctional or misleading in all this. Naturally it will be painful and upsetting to those being so "touched" of course, but the overall body of medical knowledge and understanding benefits greatly -- as will each of us reading this book. Kenneth E. MacWilliams Portland, Maine

Still the leading cause of death worldwide, heart disease challenges researchers, clinicians, and patients alike. Each day, thousands of patients and their doctors make decisions about coronary angioplasty and bypass surgery. In *Broken Hearts* David S. Jones sheds light on the nature and quality of those decisions. He describes the debates over what causes heart attacks and the efforts to understand such unforeseen complications of cardiac surgery as depression, mental fog, and stroke. Why do doctors and patients overestimate the effectiveness and underestimate the dangers of medical interventions, especially when doing so may lead to the overuse of medical therapies? To answer this question, Jones explores the history of cardiology and cardiac surgery in the United States and probes the ambiguities and inconsistencies in medical decision making. Based on extensive reviews of medical literature and archives, this historical perspective on medical decision making and risk highlights personal, professional, and community outcomes.

"Offers a historical perspective on medical decision making in the case of heart disease." (The Chronicle )"For anyone who has had a heart attack or whose family member has had one, this book is definitely worth reading." (Stephen Goddard History Wire - Where the Past Comes Alive)"Any health collection strong in cardiac care will find this a winning presentation perfect for general health or specialty collections alike." (Midwest Book )"The light Jones shines on the interventional cardiovascular enterprise illuminates numerous, sometimes fatal and always costly flaws that every patient and society at large ignores at great peril." (Nortin M. Hadler Scientists' Bookshelf)"A surprising and sobering book. David S. Jones combines rigorous research with a clear narrative style to produce a very persuasive historical analysis. I heartily recommend that physicians read *Broken Hearts* to benefit from a dose of detective work, a dose of insight, and a good dose of humility." (Jack Coulehan, MD Pharos)"Jones does a very good job of outlining how difficult it is to understand all the workings of the human body, what is involved in medical research, and how that research is applied to human subjects through the lens of one medical specialty." (Katherine Burger Johnson Watermark)"All in all, Jones presents a different and refreshing take on the challenges before us. He provides more questions than answers, but this is all to the good. Unless we pose the proper questions we cannot ever hope to obtain the right answers." (Allen B. Weisse Bulletin of the History of Medicine)"Wide-ranging, full of interesting and telling historical details, steadily paced yet thorough in its making sense of complex medicine, *Broken Hearts* exposes cardiac care as neither mundane nor settled." (Janet K. Shim Sociology of Health and Illness)"Jones asks us to embrace the complexity of medical decision-making, to recognize medical research gains and gaps, and to acknowledge the social values and priorities that shape our present scenario. Difficult decisions in medicine remain, but perhaps Jones's book will contribute to more judicious ones." (Shelley Mckellar Technology and Culture)"For the past half century, patients have been advised to undergo valve replacement, angioplasty, or coronary artery bypass graft procedures to prevent or ameliorate cardiac pathologies. But how good are these procedures? How certain are the surgeons or physicians who recommend them that they will work? How do they know? Giving some answers to these questions and showing how the criteria for making medical decisions change over time are the themes of *Broken Hearts*." (Choice)"Jones's larger point is a meditation on how we understand and misunderstand medical knowledge." (Sarah Dine Health Affairs)"Very informative and containing important insights, *Broken Hearts* is thoroughly researched, well written, and the only work of its kind dealing with these treatments of heart disease." (Christopher Lawrence, University College London)"This book will appeal to a wide audience interested in the history of coronary artery disease, its treatment options, and medical decision-making. For those wanting more, there is an extensive bibliography. In

closing, Jones asks us to embrace the complexity of medical decision-making, to recognize medical research gains and gaps, and to acknowledge the social values and priorities that shape our present scenario. Difficult decisions in medicine remain, but perhaps Jones's book will contribute to more judicious ones." (Shelley McKellar Technology and Culture)"A fascinating and insightful history of the interplay between research on the causes of coronary artery disease and the development and assessment of therapeutically especially surgical approaches to cardiac care... There is much to recommend in Broken Hearts. It is accessible, it will appeal to a wide range of readers, and it offers a useful overview of the complex issues surrounding cardiac care at a time with health-care policy, both in the United States and globally, is fiercely debated and rapidly changing." (A.R. Ruis Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences)"An excellent resource... The information gleaned from the book will aid the patient in understanding his or her disease and will assist one in decision-making." (Robin Wulffson Examiner.com)"Jones's book is a sophisticated history of heart attacks and some of the most spectacular medical interventions of the twentieth century. It is meticulously researched and thoughtful, and Jones pays equal attention to technical details, social contexts and economic implications. The book will be of interest to anyone interested in the uncertainties of modern medicine: uncertainties associated with understanding the cause of illness and, perhaps more importantly, the success of treatment." (Carsten Timmermann Social History of Medicine)" Broken Hearts is a captivating study of the history of cardiology. By moving away from the long-standing tendency to frame the history of cardiology as a progress-narrative, this book makes a great addition to the emerging body of literature that adopts a critical stance towards cardiac care..." (Somatosphere)From the Back CoverStill the leading cause of death worldwide, heart disease challenges researchers, clinicians, and patients alike. Each day, thousands of patients and their doctors make decisions about coronary angioplasty and bypass surgery. David S. Jones sheds light on the nature and quality of those decisions. Why do doctors and patients overestimate the effectiveness and underestimate the dangers of medical interventions, especially when doing so may lead to the overuse of medical therapies? To answer this question, Jones explores the history of cardiology and cardiac surgery in the United States and probes the ambiguities and inconsistencies in medical decision making."Wide-ranging, full of interesting and telling historical details, steadily paced yet thorough in its making sense of complex medicine, Broken Hearts exposes cardiac care as neither mundane nor settled." Sociology of Health and Illness"A surprising and sobering book. David Jones combines rigorous research with a clear narrative style to produce a very persuasive historical analysis. I heartily recommend that physicians read Broken Hearts to benefit from a dose of detective work, a dose of insight, and a good dose of humility." The Pharos"Jones presents a different and refreshing take on the challenges before us. He provides more questions than answers, but this is all to the good. Unless we pose the proper questions we cannot ever hope to obtain the right answers." Bulletin of the History of Medicine"Jones asks us to embrace the complexity of medical decision making, to recognize medical research gains and gaps, and to acknowledge the social values and priorities that shape our present scenario. Difficult decisions in medicine remain, but perhaps Jones's book will contribute to more judicious ones." Technology and Culture"Jones's larger point is a meditation on how we understand and misunderstand medical knowledge." Health AffairsAbout the AuthorDavid S. Jones is the A. Bernard Ackerman Professor of the Culture of Medicine at Harvard University.