



Tidsskriftet
DEN NORSKE LEGEFORENING

The doctrine of the art of the possible

BOOK REVIEW

UNNIE HØIGAARD

Former chief medical officer at Sunnaas Rehabilitation Hospital, now consultant medical doctor in insurance



Kristin M. Hauge

Lege Johan Kvalvik Stanghelle – Se mulighetene!

Lærdom fra Beitostølen, Sunnaas og Beijing. Et portrett. 148 p, ill. Nesodden: JKS forlag, 2021.

Price NOK 300

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In short, the author has given a portrait of Johan Kvalvik Stanghelle, who before retiring reflects on his life as a medical doctor. What has driven and inspired him? What advice would he give the next generation of doctors and others who want to work within rehabilitation?

The book is bound, has an extensive selection of photographs, and its 148 pages are informative and easy to understand. The book is nicely packaged with personal insights into Stanghelle's life from childhood in Nordmøre to his present life in Nesodden. There is a nice balance between the professional and the personal, with amusing and historical anecdotes from his non-traditional life as a medical doctor.

Norway's first professor in the specialty of physical medicine and rehabilitation challenged the international expertise at the start of his medical career with his pioneering trials entailing physical activity for patients with cystic fibrosis – including marathons. The general train of thought at the time was that this was contraindicated and simply dangerous, but it eventually came to be an important part of the treatment.

Author Kristin M. Hauge eloquently describes Stanghelle's passion for the field of rehabilitation and his challenging research across disciplines, professions and national borders. His keen interest in international collaboration resulted in a leading position in the large operation to ship medical relief from Norway to Poland in 1988, and he has demonstrated diplomatic skills in a long-standing cooperation with China and Russia, Palestine and Israel – and the United States. He also built Norway's largest research community within rehabilitation at Sunnaas Rehabilitation Hospital. In 2015, Stanghelle was made a Knight 1st Class of the Royal Norwegian Order of St. Olav, bestowed by HM King Harald, for his many years' service to the field of physical medicine and rehabilitation.

The common thread of his career has been his focus on opportunities as opposed to limitations. Stanghelle points out in the book that it is not just about stimulating physical activity, but about being able to see the whole person and their needs in all areas. The main focus is quality of life. Your attitude to people with disabilities is essential for doing a good job as a professional – or being a resource as a friend, family member or fellow human being. Once you pick the book up, it's hard to put it down. I read it from cover to cover in just one evening – it was time well spent.

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