

BOOK REVIEW

Medical Presentations: A Prescription for Success

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Book Title: Medical Presentations: A Prescription for Success

Authors: Terry Irwin, Julie Terberg, Echo Swinford

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This book, coauthored by a physician/educator, a presentation design expert, and a PowerPoint specialist, offers a comprehensive guide to crafting effective presentations tailored for health care professionals. Terry Irwin, a retired consultant surgeon and seasoned educator, has spent decades teaching presentation skills to medical students and professionals. Julie Terberg, a designer and founder of a creative studio, specializes in crafting impactful presentations. Echo Swinford, a PowerPoint consultant, has worked with the software since its early days. Together, they've created a resource that blends educational psychology, design principles, and technical know-how.

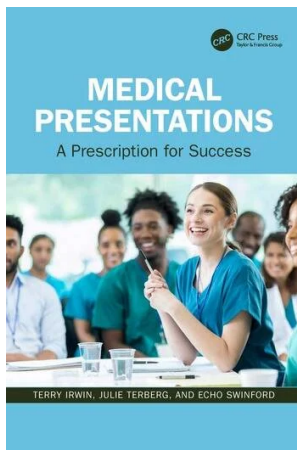
The book is structured sequentially, guiding readers through planning, constructing, and delivering presentations. It begins with a 40-page section on planning and preparation, focusing on audience engagement, clarity, and message retention. This section delves into the psychology of presentations, offering advice on how to identify key takeaways and avoid distractions. Sample clinical scenarios and striking slide designs illustrate the concepts effectively, setting a strong foundation for the book.

A highlight of this section is the chapter on using images, where the book transitions from educational theory to technical guidance. The chapter explains where to find high-quality, royalty-free images, how to cite them, and the differences between similar file types like JPEG, PNG, BMP, and TIFF and how they are best used. These practical tips, presented in a friendly, approachable tone, make the dense material accessible.

The bulk of the book—around 100 pages—is devoted to constructing presentations using PowerPoint. Chapters cover everything from navigating the interface to adding shapes, videos, animations, and transitions. The authors provide clear, step-by-step instructions, making the book valuable for beginners and casual users alike. Even seasoned PowerPoint users will benefit from the practical tips and creative examples tailored for medical content. I found myself having several aha moments, learning tricks like using pan transitions to show timelines, reducing file sizes for easier sharing, and using PowerPoint for online teaching.

The section on showing data is another standout. Visualizing data—whether through tables, charts, or graphs—can be daunting, especially when integrating Excel with PowerPoint. This section simplifies the process, focusing on essential features while offering practical advice on creating clean, impactful visuals. This section effectively addresses common pitfalls, such as cluttered tables or overly complex charts, all within just 35 pages.

The book excels at addressing the unique needs of health care professionals. While many PowerPoint manuals, like *Microsoft Office 365 for Beginners*¹ and *PowerPoint for Dummies*,² focus on general technical guidance, this book emphasizes features relevant to medical presentations. It also incorporates teaching psychology, which traditional manuals lack. However, like most technical guides, its advice is tied to the current version of PowerPoint. Significant updates to the software may necessitate a new edition.



I particularly recommend this book for medical students, as it can help them establish strong presentation habits early. However, the book may be equally beneficial for family physicians at any stage of their career. A clear and engaging presentation can elevate a resident's case presentation at a national conference, enhance knowledge retention and skill acquisition during a residency faculty's didactics, boost the success of a family physician pitching a quality initiative to a multispecialty board, or help that physician secure public buy-in for prevention strategies at a community awareness event.

For midcareer physicians like me, the book may serve as a useful prompt to revisit well-worn talks. As I read, I naturally thought of areas in my own tried-and-true talks that didn't sit well with me. Applying the book's principles, I was able to breathe new life into those presentations, making them sharper, more professional, and something I'm genuinely excited to deliver.

As a final takeaway, this book is an excellent resource for health care professionals who want to improve their presentation skills. It combines technical expertise with practical advice and tailored insights for medical audiences. Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned presenter, you'll find valuable tips to make your slides more engaging and your messages more impactful.

REFERENCES

1. Doe J, Smith A. *Microsoft 365 for Beginners: A Comprehensive Guide*. TechWorld Publishing; 2023.
2. Lowe D. *PowerPoint for Dummies*. Wiley; 2022.