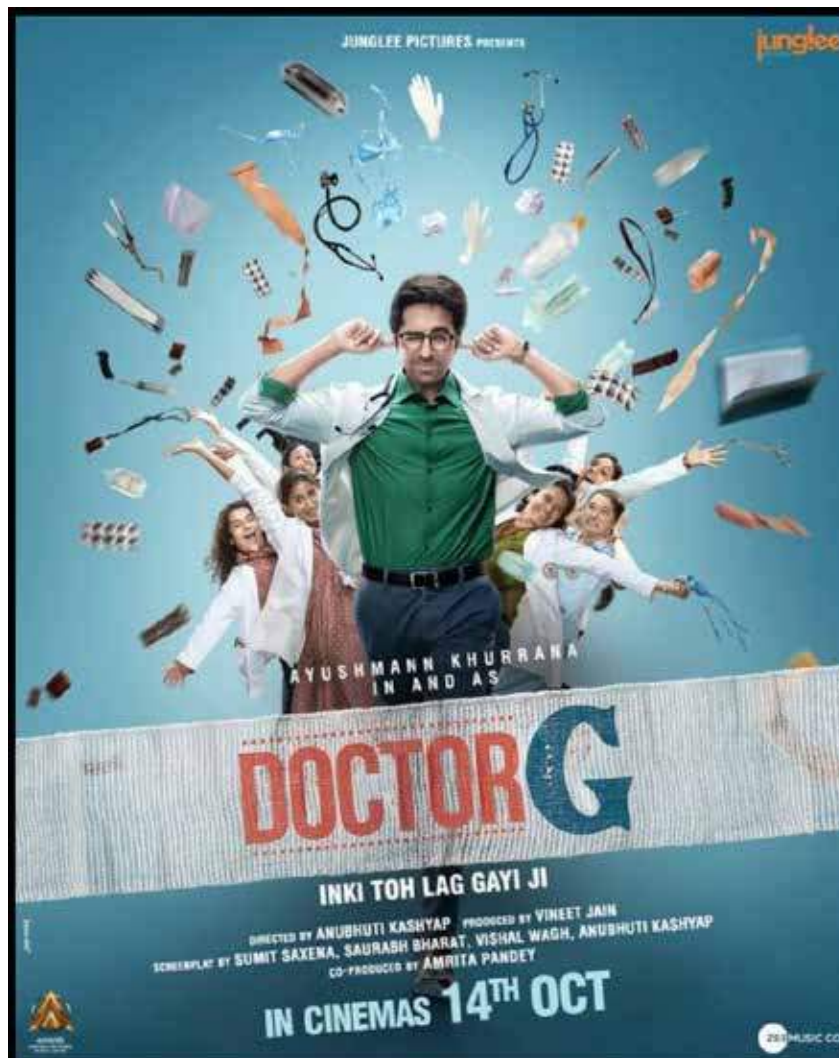


# Medicine on the big and small screen: *Dr. G*



## **Dr. G**

Starring Ayushmann Khurrana, Rakul Preet Singh, and Shefali Shah

Directed by Anubhuti Kashyal; Written by Sourabh Bhagat and Vishal Wagh

Released October 14, 2022, running time 124 minutes;  
Language – Indian Hindi with English subtitles; available on Netflix

Reviewed by Jean Holzwart

*Dr. G* is a social comedy film produced in India by Junglee Pictures starring Ayushmann Khurrana. Khurrana is a well-known Indian actor and singer who works in Hindi films. He is recognized for his portrayals

of ordinary men often battling social norms, and is the recipient of several awards.

This movie is not the typical movie that is reviewed in *The Pharos*; however, it is worth watching. Though lighthearted, it does have a strong message that echoes AΩA's mission. Although *Dr. G* is funny, emotional, and heart-warming, the issues of gender disparity, medical professionalism, and medical ethics are strong undertones throughout the film.

Dr. Uday Gupta (Khurrana) is a medical student who has just passed his final medical school exam and wants to pursue a post-graduate residency in orthopedics. However, his rank in the competitive entrance test is insufficient for an orthopedics course in Bhopal where he wants to remain. Unwilling to leave his mother

behind and move to another city for his studies, Uday reluctantly opts for the only available option to him in Bhopal—obstetrics/gynecology.

Uday approaches the residency with a huge chip on his shoulder and predictably his initiation into the residency in gynecology does not go well. He is greeted by a class of all women who immediately begin to bully and intimidate him and make his life miserable. Uday does not help the situation by his utter lack of professionalism. He is unable to answer basic questions during rounds (he doesn't know the difference between D&C and a D&E); he examines a patient without a female nurse in the room; he doesn't dress like a doctor; he treats his fellow colleagues with disrespect; and he is a sexist.

The head of the OB/GYN department, Dr. Nandini Srivastav (Shefali Shah) immediately recognizes his lack of interest in the practice, his lack of basic knowledge, and his arrogance. Irritated, Dr. Nandini summons Uday to her office and asks why he doesn't want to become a gynecologist. Uday replies that male gynecologists tend not to do well because patients prefer a female doctor examining them. Nandini admonishes him and tells him that a "doctor is a doctor." She advises him to lose the "male touch" and instead foster a "doctor's touch."

Over time, Uday slowly begins to appreciate his colleagues and the work that they do. He begins to understand the needs of the patient population in the overcrowded public hospital. A third-year resident, Dr. Fatima Siddiqui (Rakul Preet Singh) sees his efforts and becomes a friend and mentor. Yes, there is a boy-girl component in the movie, but surprisingly, it is not central to the story.

One day, Uday finds himself as the only available doctor in an emergency and performs his first delivery. Because it is a case of precipitous labor, the successful delivery takes place on the floor in the corridor of the hospital. Fatima and the other residents are impressed and excited for him and gather for an impromptu celebration. Dr. Nandini walks in and bursts his bubble when she says, "Are they celebrating because you are incompetent or because as a man you get a special prize for doing your duty?" Uday is placed under investigation but this becomes secondary to him after the mother, who had lost two previous pregnancies, names the baby after him and expresses her gratitude.

Uday next is faced with a moral and ethical dilemma which he meets head on. Uday has come to understand

his duty as a doctor toward his patients, he has come of age, and he is a doctor who understands the importance of a community of practice. The very heart of this film is the AQA foundational motto, "Be worthy to serve the suffering," which has been a stronghold for the organization since 1902.

One last comment, historically the OB/GYN field of practice in the United States was dominated by men but today that has shifted dramatically. A 2018 Association of Academic Medical Centers (AAMC) report found that 82.9 percent of OB/GYN residents were female, and suggested that the reason for the rise in female OB/GYN providers could be due to patient preference. As stated by AAMC Chief Health Care Officer, Janis M. Orlowski, MD, MACP (AQA, Medical College of Wisconsin, 2016, Alumni), "It used to be that patients preferred male gynecologists, but now the opposite is true."<sup>1</sup>

#### References

1. Kalter, L. What specialties do doctors choose? AAMC News. Nov. 2, 2018.

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