

PEDIATRIC HUMANITIES PROJECTS DECEMBER 2010

--, this was an outstanding project. I was impressed by the research you did on pediatric analgesia. You also made an excellent point about giving pediatric patients some small measure of control over their hospital experience. I also appreciated your FUNdamental point that strategies to make the hospital stay a little more pleasurable and a little less horrible can make a significant difference to the patient. You and your team continue to do wonderful work with Music-to-Heal. Finally, the resources you provided were valuable as well. All in all, this was a presentation worthy of a noon conference and demonstrated knowledge of a relevant literature, insight into the felt experience of hospitalized kids, and creative suggestions about shifting the nature of the hospital experience. Thanks for this hard work, Dr. Shapiro

I enjoyed your haiku, and they *are* hard to write. Clever way of testing your colleagues on developmental milestones. You also managed to address several important topics in pediatrics, such as r/o sepsis, otitis media, parental resistance to immunizations, and asking parents to leave the exam room when interviewing adolescents on sensitive topics. Your haiku were smart and funny. Thanks! Dr. Shapiro

Although it sounds as though you will soon be leaving, welcome to this country! Thank you for your interesting and well-researched presentation (so sorry the electronics failed us). You highlighted a critical issue of global child health. It is easy for medical students to become somewhat absorbed in their own concerns – shelf exams, nights on call – and to lose sight of the larger picture of suffering throughout the world. Thanks for the reminder! Dr. Shapiro

Hi --. Thank you for drawing our attention to the condition of scoliosis, and more broadly to chronic disease in adolescence, through your lighthearted poem. As you learned from your sisters, while the outcome can be very positive, this condition also presents many challenges, especially during a time when teens are forming their identities. As we discussed, often in the presence of a chronic medical condition, issues of self-image, independence, noncompliance, parent-child relations become intensified and complicated. I appreciated the insights your poem contributed. Dr. Shapiro

-- and --, this was a very strong patient advocacy project. Shaken baby syndrome is a significant problem, especially because many people who would shake an infant would never think of this as abusive or endangering the child. Pointing out the hazards is the first public service your pamphlet performs. The handout is pleasingly concise, written in accessible language, and full of really important information that parents might not know. Best of all, it contains many realistic and easy to implement strategies for soothing a crying baby. Excellent work! Dr. Shapiro

--, thanks for starting us off down the road of haiku. I liked the way you used this brief, pithy form to highlight complex social issues implicated in pediatric medicine, such as coping with chronic illness, denial, and mistrust of physicians. It would be nice if we could encapsulate the solutions in the 5-7-5 format. Unfortunately, there's no shortcut to working with human beings. I especially liked the way you "hung in" despite the initial lack of common ground, overcame your patient's suspicions, identified a way (through sports) to get him to take an interest in his illness, and transformed a patient from noncompliant to compliant. Thanks for this nice work. Dr. Shapiro

Hi --, you did a very thorough and informative job of presenting information on falls to your peers and professors. Not everybody in the room is going to be a pediatrician, but most of your fellow students will probably become a parent one day; and when this happens, I hope they've hung on to your educational sheet. Thanks for this good work, Dr. Shapiro

What a creative project you came up with! (And thanks to your boyfriend for his cooperation :-)). The themes of vulnerability, isolation, helplessness, and fear that these 8th grade students identified in writing about their visits to the doctor's were really insightful. I was impressed how they opened up in these essays (a tribute, I suspect, to the classroom atmosphere their teacher has established!). Thanks for helping us all to see a doctor's visit from a kid's point of view. Dr. Shapiro

--, it was very enjoyable to hear all those developmental milestones rolling by in verse! You managed to squeeze in an awful lot of information into one fairly short poem. It reminded

me just how hard it is to be an involved and conscientious parent; but your lighthearted rhymes created a sweet context. Very nice work, Dr. Shapiro

--, thanks for being the one to highlight one of the most critical health issues facing the country today – childhood obesity. The current statistics and future projections, as you noted, are frightening. Pediatricians join parents on the front lines. Increasingly, people are recognizing that this is a public health issue and requires social interventions. It cannot be solved entirely by motivated moms, dads, and doctors. However, individual physicians certainly have a role to play, both at the individual patient and at the community level, advocating in schools and corner stores for healthier food selections. I was really hoping someone would address this topic, so thank you! Dr. Shapiro

Thanks for your project on child burns. I actually learned a lot from it, especially regarding the hazard of beach bonfires. I'm sure I was not the only one unaware of the risks involved in this seemingly innocuous activity. Very informative and educational. Dr. Shapiro

--, the tragedy of the story you shared still lingers in my mind. I really liked the way you recognized your identification with this sweet little boy ("two nerds" :-)). Of course, seeing a bit of yourself in him only intensified your feelings of devastation at his terrible diagnosis. But, if you had actually been his physician, this awareness would have been the first step in figuring out how to be empathic and supportive without being overwhelmed by your own anxiety.

As I said in class, the innocent suffering that is seen in pediatrics is particularly hard to accept. Kids are on this earth to eat ice cream and ride bikes, not contract horrible degenerative terminal illnesses. I don't know that there is any way to understand or make sense of such cosmic unfairness. But what is perhaps more important than "making sense" of such situations is to remember that these children and their families must somehow figure out how to endure the unendurable. Having a compassionate, caring physician courageous enough to take such a journey with patient and parents is a great gift. It does not solve anything, but at least they are not alone. Thank you for focusing us on something many of us would prefer to ignore, yet from which ethically we cannot turn away. Dr. Shapiro