

PEDIATRIC REFLECTIONS 4/1/19

Rami Gabriel

Dear Rami, thank you for your insightful haiku which in 17 syllables captured “a” reality of Peds: All (hopefully) pediatricians love kids; sadly, at least some of the time kids “hate” doctors, not through any fault of the doctors, but because the kids are scared, hurting, and angry at their situation; finally parents are often “displeased,” and not happy, again not usually because of the doctor but because they are terrified for their child. I would nuance Dr. Murata’s excellent advice not to take parents’ and kids’ reactions too personally just slightly by saying it’s never a bad idea to ask yourself if you *have* done something to have contributed to feelings of fear, anger, mistrust etc. If not, then move on to the next step, which is to remember just how frightened and upset the kid/parents are. Trying to remember what your patient and those “difficult” parents are going through helps you extend empathy and compassion.

By the way, it’s really hard to write a good haiku. Yours was excellent, it got to the heart of an issue that confronts pediatricians all the time. The good ones figure out how to enlist parents and make them part of the team. Thanks for your contribution, Dr. Shapiro

Ryan Nguyen, Shawna Chan

Ryan and Shawna, this was an absolutely wonderful project! In the case you presented, CPS had been called because of repeated asthma exacerbations. Judgment of a “bad” parent was easy. Yet as you dug deeper, you discovered a single dad of 4, working full time, with his wife in jail and caring relatives who were not educated about the patient’s condition, was trying hard to take care of his child with asthma, but failing. I really liked your challenging the easy tendency to “blame” parents for being neglectful and irresponsible and instead recognizing the complex social determinants of health that, as your excellent anecdote pointed out, can make it so difficult for parents to take good care of their kids.

Then, after this analysis, instead of throwing up your hands in despair at the structural complexities of medicine, you decided to try to make the situation better. Your simple but effective hand-out to organize the kid’s medical condition and medications and prepare for outpatient visits was really inspired. The title, as your classmate pointed out, “Keeping (Name of Patient) Healthy,” was personal, positive, and hopeful, emphasizing not disease but wellness and recognizing that the child is more than her disease. Having a list of doctor appointments and phone numbers organized in one place is excellent, especially when other family members are involved with care. The criteria for taking a child to Urgent Care was a particularly valuable inclusion. I loved the box for questions – I think this would help parents remember what they wanted to ask, and perhaps give them the courage to do so. Including an inspirational quote was a lovely touch – it provided an uplifting context for the “why” of care.

Sometimes calling CPS is the right move, but not always. It always helps to dig a little deeper, so that you have some true understanding before you take action. In this case, your hand-out might actually

help a motivated but overwhelmed parent transform from “neglectful” to “committed.” Altogether, a really creative effort that I would like to see adopted for use in clinic! Dr. Shapiro

Richelle Homo

Hi Richelle, you used your artistic talent to its fullest in this creative and eminently useful project. The mnemonics you devised for well-child checks and immunizations were really clever and memorable. I particularly enjoyed “B(e) Dr Hip,” “V(ery) Dim,” and “T(oo) M(uch) H(uman)” – the latter being how I often feel 😊. The graphics for developmental milestones were so inventive and imaginative. I loved the way you incorporated the numerical age of the child for each set of milestones. It was also great the way the final “drawing” figure came together as a colorful, whole person, which conveyed to me your appreciation for these little developing lives. Altogether a fun, informative project. I’m not surprised that many of your classmates wanted copies to help them study for the shelf exam! Best, Dr. Shapiro

Angela Allen, Karam Gill, David Bustillo, Megan Curran

Dear A Capella Students, you have a great career before you as a musical group! Seriously, the ability to break into song with a pediatric patient is a great asset, in extremis keep it in mind – it can make a kid smile or distract them from a painful procedure. Your developmental milestones song was quite clever. Selecting the hokey-pokey melody captured the spirit of fun and playfulness that is the essence of childhood; and there was plenty to act out as each milestone was noted, which will actually help with remembering them. The lyrics were both humorous and of course age-appropriate. Altogether, an entertaining and resourceful project which was also a great teaching tool. Thank you for this excellent contribution, Dr. Shapiro

Ellen Lester, Christy Milani, Nicole Yergler, Theodora Wong

Dear Team Teeth, thank you for focusing on the important topic of pediatric dentistry. Understandably, oral hygiene is often the last thing on parents’ to do list, especially when resources are in short supply. It was one of the best brochures I’ve seen – very visually appealing, with bright colors and kid-friendly animals, cute, non-intimidating titles (“Keep Their Smiles Safe,” “You(r Teeth) are What You Eat,” “The Tooth Will Fall Out Anyway, Right”), lots of useful resources, and even a little rhyming jingle at the end. Interspersed with all the cuteness were lots of rather alarming facts about oral health that parents might not be aware of, as well as practical tips for good dental care. I hope your work encouraged your classmates that they can make their own educational brochures for patients and families that are often more accessible, informative, and useful than official hand-outs. Thanks for such an impressive effort, Dr. Shapiro

Kevin Guan, Steven Ronilo, Jennifer Mogi

Dear Team Haiku, I have never heard of a “haiku of haikus,” but what an inspired – and ambitious - idea! Haiku are actually not easy to write (although they are short), but you did a really excellent job with yours. The theme of anti-vaccer parents is always important to consider in Pediatrics, and the

three haiku devoted to this topic led to a very interesting and engaged class discussion. The HEADSS haiku captured the occasional weirdness of this portion of the interview. The kids coughing in your face and other contagious exposures hit a nerve with your classmates. The 3rd attempt LP elicited knowing groans, as did the acknowledgment of “poor handwashing technique.” The demanding mom, the worried parent were both easily recognizable as part of families encountered on Peds. Scenarios of diagnostic uncertainty and ambiguity reminded us that medicine is not an exact science. The final haiku about the med student walking into the room, the kid bursting into tears, and the self-doubt “am I a bad guy?” expressed a worry almost every medical student feels.

I can't remember all the topics your 17 haiku addressed, but they all were emblematic of the core experiences encountered during this rotation. Thank you for representing them with humor, succinctness, and heart. Best, Dr. Shapiro