

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: I think the first reviewer does not quite grasp the point of the narrative essays. Indeed, the one potential strength of this essay is that it is indeed anecdotal. However, reviewer 2 has nailed the problems, as well as offered excellent suggestions for how the essay might be beneficially revised. Please make sure the author considers these recommendations.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: This is an important and fascinating topic that to my knowledge has not yet been addressed in the narrative essays section. However, to qualify for acceptance in this column, you need to **TELL A STORY**. Please pay careful attention to the suggestions of reviewer 2, including using the first person, including a few gripping quotations, and perhaps even starting with a hook: "I knew almost nothing about research" - or something that will attract the attention and interest of the reader. Share more of your thoughts and feelings - make this more personal. How did this experience of research change you as a doctor, as a person. This piece has the potential to intrigue and even inspire readers about the process of research, but not as it is currently written.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR II: The revisions took the article about halfway. There is still a lot of irrelevant detail, lack of organization, and insufficient development of the most important insights (such as beginning researchers may have similar feelings of being lost, not knowing what questions to ask as patients). I've made extensive edits and encouraged the authors to rethink the piece further.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR II: This revision is several steps in the right direction (and by the way, congratulations on the success of your research project!). However, it still reads as rather redundant (in terms of singing the praises of collaboration) and lacking in a tight structure. I have attempted to make some edits which reduce still further content information about the research process (which will not interest any reader except one wanting to replicate your study) and trying to clarify your main points. The narrative essays are supposed to be around 1000 words, so I also made cuts to try to focus and shorten the piece.

To proceed, please do the following:

- 1) Although I love the Voltaire quote, I don't exactly understand its relevance to the essay. Are you saying that Jane was the "nature" that "cured" you of the "disease" of fearing research, while your project kept you "amused"? Please either connect the quote to the essay or delete it.
- 2) I was very intrigued by the parallel process of being a patient and being a neophyte researcher. I did not develop this too much, but please think about how you can bring this theme into greater prominence and coherence. I personally found it to be a unique and intriguing insight.
- 3) Please carefully consider the edits suggested in the attached. You do not have to accept all of them - or any of them - but please keep any rewrites to around 1,000 words.

Thank you for your efforts on this essay. I know when it is polished it will make a valuable contribution to this column.