

## FM REVIEW 2014 9

**COMMENTS TO EDITOR:** This essay has some potential, but it is unfocused and its points unclear in its present iteration. The author needs to clarify the sources of his frustrations with practice; and how “slowing down” his practice made sense despite the loss of income and support of his chair. One reviewer liked it; while the other was not very impressed. I’m suggesting major revision to the author.

**COMMENTS TO AUTHOR:** This essay is an interesting reflection on the frustrations and struggles of maintaining relationships with patients in a climate that prioritizes efficiency and productivity. However, it is not publishable in its present form. It requires significant editing and refocusing.

There are paragraphs that seem “detours” from your main point. For example, consider deleting the paragraph “A skilled and caring colleague...” or at least revising it to make the point that (perhaps?) you were not willing to pay the “high price” that he paid. I’d also recommend deleting the sentence “My staff and I explained to patients...” This is really unnecessary to the main point of changing the focus of the way you practiced. You don’t need to reassure the readers that you behaved responsibly toward your patients. Also, the paragraph about “There were other reasons patients transferred care,” although undoubtedly true, is not really on point – the essay is not about why patients left your practice. Similarly, the following paragraph seems to devote a great deal of detail to how you took care of the patients who were leaving. Maybe you can make this point more briefly, and focus on how the more limited practice was in fact more rewarding – maybe elaborate on the story of George, or share another patient anecdote.

Finally, it is puzzling that the department “gave permission” to limit new patients and two schedule longer visits, you were then punished for following these guidelines by being labeled a “low producer.” Perhaps you can explain this more clearly.

In reading your essay, it seems its main point is that, despite losing 15% of your income, being criticized by your chair, and losing long-time patients, in your eyes you became a better doctor finding more satisfaction in your practice as a result of the changes you made. If this is indeed the message of the essay, please consider ways of crafting the essay to express this with greater focus.

Also, since you are currently faculty in a residency program, consider what a younger physician starting out in practice might learn from your essay. Should they be willing to work part-time or for a reduced income? Should they be willing to accept being a “low producer”? What counsel do you give your residents about how to marry satisfaction with a successful practice in the current healthcare environment?

Thank you for your attention to these concerns, as well as the specific comments of the reviewers.

**COMMENTS TO EDITOR II:** This essay describes how the author chose to make changes in the amount of time he spent with patients. The result was both decrease in status within his practice as well as financial loss, but also increased professional and patient satisfaction. The original submission was all

over the map, with some good points, but an enormous amount of extraneous and confusing information. However, the author was meticulous in incorporating reviewer and editor suggestions. As a result he has really turned around his essay. His points are now crystal clear; and as reviewer commented, many practicing physicians will be able to relate to his perspective. I recommend minor revision, only to correct some small stylistic missteps and clarify one point further.

**COMMENTS TO AUTHOR:** This revision is really impressive. Thank you for being so meticulous in addressing all reviewer and editor concerns and suggestions. The essay now has a tight spine, all its points are crystal clear, it is focused and well-developed. You make a compelling case for choosing professional and patient satisfaction over status and financial remuneration, although it should not have to be a choice that any doctor has to make. Nevertheless, the essay succeeds very well in demonstrating that physicians still have choices about the kinds of doctors they want to be and how they want to practice their profession.

Please note 3 minor suggestions on the attached file. (Because of the heavy editing, I've highlighted each suggestion with a comment to make it easier to locate). The only one of any substance asks you to clarify that, when you say you were no longer practicing medicine as you once had, this represented a negative alteration. The other two recommendations are stylistic only.

Thank you again for the thought and effort you put into revising this manuscript.

**COMMENTS TO EDITOR III:** The author has made the small changes requested. I think this is now an interesting article about the importance of practicing medicine in a way that is meaningful and satisfying to the physician. I suspect that many physicians in practice will relate to the author's struggles, as well as the decisions he ultimately made.

**COMMENTS TO AUTHOR III:** Thank you for the revisions. The article now reads very well. It sends a clear message about the importance of practicing medicine in a way that is meaningful and satisfying to the physician. I think many physicians in practice will relate to the dilemma you faced, and identify with the choices you ultimately made.