

## FM REVIEW 2015 24 COMMENTS

**COMMENTS TO EDITOR:** This essay is written from the perspective of a family physician looking back on her struggle as a "resident in difficulty." The topic is very important, and it is rare to hear the voice of the resident in difficulty (more often, we are all talking "about" residents in difficulty).

Unfortunately the writing is not particularly strong; but both reviewers indicated the essay was salvageable. The first reviewer made some excellent suggestions; and I have also provided line editing. It also needs to focus less on the research and more on the personal story. I think with additional work it will be a valuable contribution to the journal.

**COMMENTS TO AUTHOR:** This is an insightful essay from a perspective rarely heard from - the physician who encountered difficulties during residency training. However, it needs more work. As both reviewers noted, the writing is very uneven. Reviewer 1 made some specific helpful suggestions, and I have also provided line editing for your consideration. However, we also recommend that you have a colleague or mentor review the revised manuscript.

In addition to grammatical and stylistic issues, please delete or significantly reduce the references to the research literature. The narrative essay is supposed to tell a story - your story - and it is distracting to be immersed in numbers and abstract generalizations. Much of what is contained in these paragraphs can probably be rewritten in light of your personal experience.

A final point is that, in certain places, the essay takes on a somewhat defensive, self-justifying tone. This is not necessary. It is clear that you have overcome your challenges and are successfully launched in your career. Please consider rewriting these passages.

We appreciate the honesty and thoughtfulness of your submission, and hope you are willing to continue to refine and hone your message.

**COMMENTS TO EDITOR II:** This essay tells a personal story about a resident in difficulty. It is a story worth telling. The author has paid careful attention to reviewers' and editor's comments, and has complied with all suggested changes. Unfortunately, this is one of those essays that started off a few hundred words over limit, and has now mushroomed to almost double the specified word length. I am recommending some judicious editing to reduce the length by at least 550 words. If the author is able to do this, this will be a worthy essay to accept.

**COMMENTS TO AUTHOR II:** Thank you for your revisions. Much of the material you added is really eloquent, and shows the reader much more of your journey. Because you have added this new material, however, you are now significantly over the limit of 1000 words. While there is a little flexibility on this ceiling, the essay as it stands is too long and needs to be edited down to a more reasonable length. You need to cut at least 550 words. Fortunately, you can make a start at doing this by considering the cuts indicated in the attached text.

A narrative essay is intended to tell a personal story, not to review the literature or offer advice to residency training programs. Therefore, you can save a fair number of words simply by eliminating these paragraphs. Also, in a story you would not list points, as you do here. Think about how you would "tell" how you survived this difficult experience to a friend or struggling resident. This may help you rewrite - and shorten this section as well. Finally, please keep "advice" to a minimum. I think you can get away with it in the final paragraph, but the earlier paragraph ("I would encourage faculty

to be patient...") should either be cut entirely or rewritten from your point of view (The faculty who helped me the most remained patient...). Again see attached for suggested edits.

If you are able to shorten the essay and maintain a consistent narrative, storytelling tone, this will be a very interesting and educational piece for our readership.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR III: The author has done an excellent job of rewriting - as well as reducing the word count. It appears she sought input from a colleague with excellent editing skills and the result is very effective. I suggest 3 minor word changes which I'd like the author to approve, but otherwise this essay should be accepted in my opinion.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR III: Congratulations, this is an excellent revision. It looks as though you solicited input from an experienced editor. Good choice! The guidance you received really helped to focus and strengthen this essay. A lot of weaker material was deleted, with the result that the essence shines forth strongly and clearly. The last sentence is powerful, and ending on a question I personally found much more effective than a more didactic approach.

I suggest three extremely minor word changes (see attached - my edits in brown). 1. PDF p. 1 ("...it was not my best decision"). I liked the slightly rueful tone of your original writing so either retain or accept my alternative suggestion. 2. p. 2 "...I had spent much of my (delete "whole") life 3. p. 4 "Now that I am practicing (instead of working)" - to avoid repetition of "working with."

You have written a brave and honest essay which I hope will be read by many residency directors and faculty and cause them to wrestle with your concluding query.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR IV: This is the author's 4th revision, and I think the essay has reached its potential. I actually like the essay quite a bit. The topic of a resident in difficulty is an extremely important one; and the author has replaced the somewhat defensive, self-justifying tone of the original draft with a more transparent and reflective one. This is a story that needs to be told, and I think will give both residents and residency faculty much to ponder.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR IV: This essay has evolved into a thoughtful, open, and well-written contribution. It is a story that needs to be told, and I think will give both residents and residency faculty much to ponder. Thank you for the courage to share your experience.