

FM REVIEW 2015 29 COMMENTS

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: This is an essay describing a very interesting Patient Voices research project, which enlists community volunteers in participatory research to improve cancer screening in a low-income area for patients with multiple medical conditions. Unfortunately, as it is structured, it does not even approach a narrative essay. It does not tell a story, but rather talks in generalizations about what the author has learned from the experience. I make suggestions below about how the essay might be recast so that it would be more appropriate for this column. I recommend reject and resubmit.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: This sounds like an interesting and very worthwhile research project. However, the essay as it stands is not appropriate for the narrative essay column. We are primarily interested in essays that tell a story. This essay is not narrative, but is more a reflection on what this foray into participatory research has taught you. We would be interested in seeing a different version of the essay if you could write it as a story - perhaps describe a group meeting of volunteers; or your experiences over time with a couple of the participant volunteers you gotten to know the best. The paragraph in which you discuss your deepening understanding of what participatory research really means is powerful and affecting, and very much worth retaining. Finally, it is rather ironic that, in describing a Patient Voices project, the only voice we hear is yours. Perhaps there is a way of rewriting the essay that incorporates the voices of one or two of your patient volunteers as well.