

FM REVIEW 2016 28 COMMENTS

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: This well-written essay provides a touching and humble example of how sometimes building relationship with the patient and allowing the patient to set the agenda by telling their story can have a beneficial impact on clinical outcomes and physician satisfaction. Both reviewers liked the piece and made only minor suggestions. A few logical issues in the narrative need to be addressed, but with a little reworking this should make an excellent contribution to the journal.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: Thank you for this well-written essay. It provides a touching and humble example of how sometimes building relationship with the patient and allowing the patient to set the agenda by telling their story can have a beneficial impact on clinical outcomes and physician satisfaction. Great title, and you come full circle beautifully with your compelling concluding sentence.

We would like to request a few minor revisions in order to bring the essay more sharply into focus:

1) Please pay attention to the opening paragraph. I agree with reviewer 2 that it seems to invert the priorities of the rest of the essay - i.e., starting off with behavior change, then moving to relationship. Perhaps you can modify this to emphasize that clinical priorities and treatment plans tend to emphasize the behavioral, the measurable... when really it is the context of the relationship that must be nurtured for those concrete things to happen. I also encourage you to remove the reference to motivational interviewing. This is not relevant to your essay.

2) It was unclear to me whether your patient's affect shifted in any way as a result of her accident and subsequent unemployment and loss of friendship? Was she always joyous, as you describe in the first paragraph? If so, perhaps you can comment on this - perhaps she felt she tried to put on a good face for you? If not, you might discuss why you might have missed an alteration in her mood.

3) Your main point, I believe, is that sometimes narrow medical management misses the boat, and physicians need to think more broadly about building relationship and listening to what's important to their patients. This is an outstanding message. However, I was puzzled that as an R1, you seemed to do exactly that - did this improve Ronda's health, and there was a subsequent decline when you applied stricter management approaches? Was this approach not effective initially, but when you returned to it later it resulted in patient improvement? Perhaps your renewed attention to patient story was somehow different - more sophisticated? more evolved? - the second time around? In any case, please try to shed some light on this issue.

3) It is almost jarring to read "she decided to wash her hair..." Why? What happened? What caused Ronda to take this highly symbolic positive step? Can you elucidate this for the reader?

4) The essay is already somewhat lengthy. Although we have asked for elaboration of some points, please try to edit closer to 1000 words. Some of the details of Ronda's story could be deleted without harming its substance.

Please pay attention to reviewer feedback as well. However, you do not need to be concerned about contractions, as reviewer 2 suggests. The tone of these essays is informal and personal, and contractions are perfectly appropriate in this format.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR II: This is a superb revision (thanks I believe in part to LeNeve!). The author has listened carefully to the substantive concerns of reviewers and editor, and has shaped his narrative very skillfully to address them. The essay now has a clear focus and through line, and illustrates very well the foundational importance of relationship in family medicine. Also, many extraneous details have been removed. In the attachment, I suggest a few tiny word changes. If the author is willing to accept them, this is ready to go.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR II: You've done a superb job on this revision, thank you. The opening paragraph is much more focused, and the point clearer. You now have a strong through line to the story. By removing extraneous details of the patient's story, you've also made it easier for the reader to follow your main point. Thank you also for addressing the "mystery" of the hair-washing - why today? I think you are right - as the family physician, you get to know some of the story, but rarely all of it. I have made a few extremely minor word substitutions to avoid redundancy. Please look over the attached and either approve or rewrite these few sentences as you wish. Again, thank you for such a thoughtful and skilled revision.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR III: Author has made all suggested minor revisions as well a few additional small changes that improve the readability and flow of the manuscript. Please accept - this is an excellent piece of work.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR III: Thank you for your attention to the details of wordsmithing. The revised manuscript has excellent readability and flow. Language matters, in writing and in practice!