

FM REVIEW 2016 32 COMMENTS

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: The author raises an important issue about the arbitrariness of med school admissions interviews and particularly focuses on the opportunities to introduce racial, gender, and cultural bias into these experiences. However, a significant section of the essay is devoted to enumerating the problems with admissions interviews and suggesting alternatives. Unfortunately, this drags the essay into the realm of an opinion piece with a couple of inserted anecdotes. Also, the anecdotes themselves, while clearly demonstrating bias, are not very personal (even the one about the author!). There is not much evidence of reflection or self-disclosure. I'd like to ask the author to rewrite and resubmit, removing these sections entirely and making it more personal and reflective.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: Thank you for raising the important issue of how bias and rank prejudice can intrude in the interview process. We like your essay quite a bit and would be interested in considering a resubmission. In its present form, however, it is not appropriate for our journal. As written, it reads too much like an opinion piece (the interview process needs change!), and although we agree with your conclusions, the journal has a policy of not publishing opinion pieces.

The purpose of the narrative essay section is to tell a story; and allow the particulars of that story to point toward more universal issues without stating them didactically. You include two anecdotes, one about your own experience and one about Sarah's. Surprisingly, although the content of each is appalling and shocking, neither story comes to life. Narrative essays should emphasize reflection and transparency. Help us to see you (and Sarah) a bit more as people. What was it like to be told to justify your difference from other Indian applicants? How did this egregious stereotyping affect you (if it did) beyond that particular interview? What was it like for Sarah to hear that she should have babies rather than care for other people's sick children as their doctor?

If you can dive deeper into these stories, as well as the way you've chosen to encourage applicants to resist bias and racism as it manifests in the unequal power dynamic of the applicant interview, and advocate for an interview process that proactively pursues diversity, we think you will have a powerful essay that will be well-suited to this section of the journal.