

FM REVIEW 2016 37 COMMENTS

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: All reviewers very much like the story of acceptance and inclusiveness that this author tells; but all agree the essay needs a lot more work. I think we need to give the author a chance to illuminate his main point more clearly; and to show us a little more of who he is so that we understand why it matters. The reviews are really excellent, and should point the way for a substantive revision.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: There is a beautiful story of acceptance and inclusiveness in this essay, but it needs to be brought out much more clearly. Reviewers 1 and 3 provide excellent guidelines for you to follow in doing a major revision of your work. Reviewer 2 offers assistance at a more granular level. Overall, please keep in mind the following:

- 1) We need to understand a little more about you as a person and as a physician, particularly in terms of judgments or biases that you've encountered in the past to help us understand why this experience was so meaningful. Toward the end of the essay, you allude to the religious conflicts and tensions in your country. Maybe sharing an anecdote in this regard at the start will help us enter into the anxieties you felt in traveling to Turkey.
- 2) I agree the reference to the terrorist attack needs to be elaborated. Did this make you feel Turkey would be dangerous? Unwelcoming to you specifically because of your nationality?
- 3) I also agree you need to introduce the conference more clearly and what the Vasco da Gama group is. Take us on the journey: Why were you there? What were you seeking
- 4) Please change the title, remove the vdGM2015 which will convey nothing to most readers, and make it more personal, ie., "Finding Spiritual Connection and Friendship in a Group of Young Family Physicians"
- 5) Please find another term for "exchanger," which will be confusing to our readers. Maybe just "participants" or "attendees"?
- 6) The main focus of the essay should be the powerful experience in the mosque. Therefore, I'd suggest shortening the initial greeting at the airport and subsequent encounters. You can still make the point, but don't undermine your momentum.
- 7) For a similar reason, I found it quite weak to end on the story of Manuel. It reads like an afterthought. This needs to remain your story. Please either delete this paragraph entirely, or perhaps find a way to show his experience as related to your own.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR II: This is one of those essays that has a really beautiful spirit, but is in need of a lot of structuring. The writing at times is touching, but also at times awkward and grammatically inaccurate. It was also very long (over 1300 words). However, all reviewers liked it, so we have embarked on what will be a rather effortful revision process. The good news is that the author added an important section about his own experiences as a Christian in Nigeria, which helps to explain his

trepidations about journeying to Turkey. I have done significant line editing of this revision, and also made recommendations for further cuts, as the essay is still over the 1000 word limit. I also request that the author give us some indication about how the powerful experience of unity and brotherhood he had in the Istanbul mosque has translated into his care for patients back in his own country.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR II: Thank you for the openness with which you approached the suggested revisions. The paragraph you added about your own faith and how conflicts about religion have had disastrous consequences in Nigeria help us to understand you and the anxiety you felt journeying to a Muslim country.

We are requesting that you continue to work on this moving but still somewhat unfocused piece. It remains quite long, exceeding our word limit by over a third. In an effort to reduce the length while providing a clear "through-line" in terms of your message, I have made line-by-line edits. You do not need to adopt all of these, but perhaps they will assist you in making additional revisions. As well as considering these specific recommendations, please consider the following:

1) The line about cultural diversity is not clear, and perhaps is not necessary since the essay is really about religious tolerance. Please either figure out a way to briefly clarify what you mean; or perhaps just eliminate this reference entirely.

2) Because the word count is still over our recommended limit, please consider additional cuts. I suggest you look at the paragraph about the "city itself," which while quite lyrically written, is a little tangential to your main point about connecting with people of different faiths, not a city. Another possible cut might be the story about Lidia. If you choose to keep this, I think you can shorten it, and connect it more clearly to your own story (for example, you could say, your experience in the mosque reminded you of what your colleague Lidia had said about the muezzin).

3) Despite our asking for additional cuts, we'd like to see you add at least a couple of lines at the end of the essay about how your "awakening" in the mosque affected your practice as a family physician back in Nigeria. The journal really likes to see how personal growth and transformation is connected to professional attitudes and behavior. We understand that the main purpose of this essay is to describe what happened to you in Istanbul, but it would be nice if you could at least indicate a bridge back to your care of patients and interactions with colleagues.

Thank you for your willingness to work on this essay. It conveys an inspiring message of brotherhood that is much needed in these precarious times.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR III: The author did an excellent job of addressing both major concerns as well as working with the line-by-line edits provided. The essay is now much shorter (within the 1000 word limit) and more focused on the transformative experience of the author at the WONCA preconference for young family physicians. The author has also added an important sentence linking his personal experience back to ways he has changed his attitude toward patients of different faiths back in his home country. I have made a few small grammatical and stylistic recommendations on the attached document. If the author accepts them, this article is ready to be accepted.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR III: Thank you for your careful attention both to the larger issues raised in the revision request and your meticulous line-by-line editing. We particularly appreciate the line you added in the final paragraph showing how your personal transformation in Istanbul has translated into changed attitudes back home toward patients of different faiths. The essay fortunately has retained its lyrical, joyous quality while becoming more focused on the message you wish to convey.

Please see attached for a few minor stylistic word choices and edits. In particular, I've tried to organize the narrative in terms of paragraphs so that the essay does not have great blocks of prose without a break. Please check to see if you agree with these small suggestions, or make appropriate revisions.

Thank you for this uplifting and hopeful piece of writing.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR IV: This touching essay tells a tale of finding unity in diversity (especially religious difference) among a group of young family doctors at a WONCA pre-conference. The author has accepted all stylistic line-by-line edits I recommended in an effort to smooth out language and clarity issues. Only one tiny point: the "a" (before "people") in the last sentence of the last paragraph should be removed. I don't think this requires authorial approval, since he approved all the changes I suggested (including this one) - my guess he just overlooked removing this one letter. Otherwise, I recommend accepting this essay.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR IV: Thank you for your scrupulous attention to the suggested minor edits. Fortunately, this version of your essay retains its affirming message of unity and brotherhood while being somewhat more focused and easier to follow. We appreciate your considering Family Medicine as an outlet for your work.