

FM REVIEW 2016 26 COMMENTS

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: This submission describes an interesting project - making prayer shawls blessed by chaplains for patients and families. Unfortunately, it is not a narrative essay. In its construction, is more like a descriptive report with testimonials from patients and staff. It should be rejected, but if the author is willing to rework it as a narrative, for example, one that tells the story of a particular prayer shawl and its effect on patient, family, and physician, we could appropriately review this sort of essay.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: Thank you for sharing this valuable and moving project. Prayer shawls, as you point out, can offer healing to patients, family members, staff, and crafters. They are a lovely idea.

Unfortunately, your submission does not meet criteria for a narrative essay. Rather it is more like a descriptive report with testimonials from patients and staff. The purpose of the narrative essay column in this journal is to tell an emotionally evocative and moving story. Therefore, if you were to write an essay telling the story of a particular prayer shawl and its journey from crafter to patient, this would be of interest.

Since this is a journal primarily for family medicine educators, such a story would also have to demonstrate its relevance to this particular population: what do physicians and other educators in medicine learn from this practice of distributing prayer shawls? How do the prayer shawls intersect with physicians (especially family physicians) and how do they influence the way physicians engage with their patients?

In summary, tell a story about how a particular prayer shawl affected a patient/family and hopefully their physician as well. If you would like to submit a new essay along these lines, we would be very interested in reviewing it.