

FM REVIEW 2017 1 COMMENTS

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: This is an interesting essay about the author rethinking medical approaches to end-of-life care as a result of her own serious illness and miraculous recovery. It is a provocative essay because it explores a position less often endorsed in medical education these days - i.e., do all possible, even when it seems futile. In her case, this medical tenacity literally saved her life. The first reviewer suggests some ways of qualifying the essay so as to minimize its (likely unintentional) assumption of physician omnipotence and to refocus it more toward the importance of considering the individual circumstances of each patient. These are excellent points that should be brought to the author's attention. I also feel that the essay needs to better highlight the tension between the author's intellectual beliefs and her personal experience. I believe with some work this essay will make a thought-provoking contribution to the journal.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: Thank you for this interesting and provocative essay. First of all, let me say I'm very glad you are here to write it! You make an important challenge, based in your personal miraculous recovery, to conventional cautions about "futile" heroic measures at end of life. We feel the essay has potential to make a valuable contribution to the journal, but also requires additional work.

The first reviewer makes useful suggestions about how to minimize the (probably unintentional) assumption of physician omnipotence and how to more strongly emphasize the "teaching point" of considering the individual circumstances of each patient.

Another equally important point, in my view, is the tension between your intellectual beliefs as a physician and your personal experience as a patient. This certainly does not need to be resolved - in fact, your ambivalence is what makes this such a potentially provocative essay to discuss. I'd like to see you highlight this ambivalence in the final paragraph - to make clear you are not simplistically choosing the heroic measures path by having lunch with the physician who saved your life. Please look at the comments on the attached copy of your essay.

On a more minor note, I think you can do better with the title. As written, it is not especially intriguing. Think about something a little more revealing and personal: "My Brush with Death..." or "Miraculous Recovery..."; then you could use your current title as a subtitle.

Finally, reviewer 2 made excellent and extensive line edits in the essay. Please consider these carefully, as they generally improve the essay's writing style.

Thank you for this essay. It reminds us that decisions about life and death are rarely algorithmic and never simple.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR II: This is an excellent and thoughtful revision. With some careful deletions and some well-placed additions, I feel the author has resolved the not insignificant concerns of the reviewers and myself. This version eliminates the unintentional implication of physician omnipotence. Instead it stresses the ambivalence of wanting to logically approach end of life

decisions while have personally a medical miracle. The author has created a much more interesting title; and has faithfully followed the superb edits of Reviewer 2. A bit to my surprise, I think this version can be accepted for publication.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR II: Thank you for such careful and skillful revisions. The new title is really interesting and draws in the reader. The ambivalence of wanting to logically approach end of life decisions while have personally a medical miracle now effectively organizes the essay. The revised final sentence now echoes this ambivalence. Finally, incorporating the excellent suggestions of Reviewer 2 has substantially improved the flow and readability of the essay. You've succeeded in writing a thought-provoking piece that complicates conventional wisdom about EoL. I think it will stimulate many conversations among residents and faculty alike.