

FM REVIEW 2018 13 COMMENTS

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: This essay describes the experience of a young Nigerian family physician being inspired by her participation in an international conference. Two of 3 reviewers recommended major revision, with the third recommending reject. The main problem that all agree on is that the story is very light on content - it is more an enthusiastic travelogue. The reviewers make many excellent suggestions that would help the reader understand the context of medical practice from which this author emerges; and would help the author concentrate on one or two lessons that she learned that could be applied in her home setting. The essay has a few intriguing "teasers," as when the author describes her sense of being "trapped" in Nigerian healthcare system; or when she writes that she has begun to advocate for "the freedom" to pursue personal development. But it is unclear what she means, and I suspect this is where the heart of the essay will be found.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: It is always interesting to hear about the development of family medicine in other countries. Your experience at this conference is heartwarming to read about. However, for this submission to be considered by our journal, many substantive changes would have to be made. Please consider the excellent reviews provided, as they all coalesce around themes of focusing less on the conference you attended per se you and more on one or two best practices that you were able to take home with you. Importantly, as at least two reviewer stress, it is essential to make this a personal story, so the conversational tone you've adopted is perfect. Sharing your discouragement with the Nigerian healthcare system is also very appropriate. But the emphasis needs to be shifted from your experience at a conference, no matter how valuable, to whether or not you were able to begin working toward change in your country, and how you went about this.

1) Help us understand what family medicine looks like in Nigeria; and what motivated you to become a family doctor.

2) Make this a story more about your personal journey in family medicine - what discourages you? what inspires you? How did the conference change you? Show us through specific examples, rather than generalities and abstractions.

3) For me, the organizing theme of this essay should be the following sentence, which is buried toward the end of the essay: "I have already started advocating for freedom to seek personal development as young physicians and from the restraints of mediocrity, so as to promote a health system that is responsive to the needs of the people." Build your essay around this outcome.

he narrative arc you are describing might look something like this: initial idealistic expectations for family medicine; discouragement of encountering realities of healthcare in Nigeria; uplift of finding likeminded souls and innovative models at the international conference; action to work toward "freedom for personal development and release from mediocrity"; and the successes and failures of these attempts.

4) SHOW us. Tell a story of how you are pursuing "freedom." Help us experience your journey.

Please also keep the essay to 1000 words and note concerns about writing style.

We look forward to your revision.