

FM REVIEW 2018 25 COMMENTS

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: I liked this essay quite a bit. Overall, it is well written and emotionally involving. There are a few inaccurate phrases and some inconsistencies in tense, but these are easily addressed.

On the one hand, the anecdotes speak for themselves, and the point they make is painfully obvious. However, narrative essays usually include more self-reflection. Personally, I would love to hear from the author: How does she cope with these kinds of slights and racist assumptions? How did she react in these situations and how would she have liked to react? What, if anything, did she learn from these incidents that might help others in similar situations?

Another point which I have less clarity on is the possibility that all these anecdotes might be read as denigrating the roles of janitors, dieticians, nurses, and medical students (all lower status roles than doctor). I wonder if there is a way the author can make clear she was not insulted by an association with lower-status roles in medicine, but by the racist assumption that a person of color could not possibly be a doctor.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: I was moved and enraged by reading this essay, consisting of example after example of others making racist assumptions about the physician-author because of her appearance. It is well-written and emotionally involving. There are a few misplaced phrases and inconsistencies in tense (see attached) that can be addressed very easily.

More substantively, I wonder if the essay might benefit from a bit more self-reflection. From one perspective, these incidents speak for themselves, and their point is painfully obvious. However, I would like to understand: How do you cope cope with these kinds of slights and racist assumptions? How did you react in these situations and how would you have liked to react? What, if anything, did you learn from these incidents that might help others in similar situations? Perhaps such questions could be considered in a couple of concluding paragraphs.

Another point about which I have some concern is the possibility that all these anecdotes might be read as denigrating the roles of janitors, dieticians, nurses, and medical students (all lower status roles than doctor), which of course is clearly not your intention. I wonder if there might be a way you can make clear that you were not insulted by an association with lower-status jobs and roles in medicine, but rather by the racist assumption that a person of color could not possibly be a doctor.

Again, it is so important that these stories are shared, especially with a wide audience not all of whom have experienced racism or micro-aggressions directly, and who may not fully grasp the magnitude of harm caused by such statements.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR:

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: I like this revision. The specific writing issues in the first draft have been addressed; and importantly, the concluding paragraph does show some evidence of reflection, as well as clarifying that the author was not offended by the low status of the other jobs attributed to her, but rather to the fact that these individuals could not believe a woman of color could be a doctor. I could have wished for a bit more introspection, especially in terms of how she coped other than trying to resist internalization of bias (so sad and so upsetting!). However, I suspect the author has gone as far as she feels comfortable going, and I respect that boundary.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: Thank you for these thoughtful revisions. I think the final paragraph is especially strong, and shows the insidious consequences of implicit bias and overt racism. I truly am sorry that you have been subjected to this treatment, but believe that by sharing your story you can raise awareness in family medicine educators who may believe such interactions are a thing of the past. Thank you also for the final sentence so well-turned that clarifies it is not the low status of the jobs attributed to you that bothered you, but the fact that none of these people could imagine a woman of color as a physician. I do believe that raising your voice will help change this deplorable reality.