

FM REVIEW 2018 16 COMMENTS

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: This is an interesting essay about the author's mid-life career change from rural private practice to an academic residency program. Both reviewers liked it (mildly). I agree with Reviewer 2 that the author could be more explicit about the nature of the "crossroads" he reached, and what were the factors that contributed to his realizing that teaching had become his mission, a better way to serve his specialty, than full-time direct patient care in his community. I think with a few fairly small rewrites this one will be ready to accept.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: Thank you for sharing your journey from private rural practice to an academic residency program. It is always interesting for our readers to learn something of their colleagues' paths in family medicine. We liked your essay and feel it is appropriate for our journal. We would like to request that you make a few minor revisions (indicated on the attached). As well, we hope you can clarify the nature of the crossroads that emerged for you and what were the factors that led you to realize your mission had shifted from exclusive focus on providing healthcare to your small rural community to training future family docs. Did it have to do with the sense that FM residents often don't even see role models such as yourself? Please help us understand your thought process a little more deeply.

One caveat regarding Reviewer 1's request that you "make a mildly political statement about the drift away from private practice and what is being lost". As a matter of policy, the journal does not publish opinion pieces. While this is a very interesting point, and I think contributed to your own choices, if you choose to expand on this thought, please do so from your personal perspective, rather than pontificating for the specialty as a whole.

Thank you again for sharing your experience.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: This author has done an outstanding revision of this essay. The most important clarification has to do with his discussion of why he moved from a rural private practice to residency teaching. This point is much more understandable in this version. A lot of extraneous material has been removed and the writing is very tight and confident.

I intended to recommend acceptance, but when I read the author's cover letter I was impressed by the ambivalence he still feels about whether this was the right choice. I feel incorporating this doubt would beneficially complicate the essay and show that often career decision do not come without ongoing self-questioning. I recommend that he include this wrestling in a few sentences (the word count can accommodate this if he is succinct).

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: Thank you for a superb revision. The most important improvement has to do with your discussion of why you moved from a rural private practice to residency teaching. This point is much more understandable in this version. Thank you as well for removing extraneous material that cluttered your main points. The writing is very tight and confident.

I was actually going to recommend accepting the essay as written - until I read your cover letter! I was impressed by the ambivalence you express as to whether you've made the right choice. I feel incorporating this self-doubt would beneficially complicate the essay and show that often career decision do not come without ongoing questioning and uncertainty. I would really like to see if you could include this wrestling in a few sentences (the word count can accommodate this if you are succinct!). Specifically, please consider adding some variation on the following sentence at the end of the second-to-last paragraph: "I still have concerns that having stayed put in my office and finding a way to "teach more" from there could have achieved an important end and would have been [an equally compelling essay to write] - equally valuable. I simply chose a different path."

Thank you for such meticulous attention to reviewer and editor comments. It was obvious that you took great care in revising the essay, and the result is both satisfying and thought-provoking.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: As I said in my earlier recommendation, I was ready to recommend ACCEPT for the earlier revision, which was truly impressive, until I read the author's cover letter, in which he struggled with questions as to whether he'd made the right choice in leaving his rural practice for residency teaching. I thought this was such an interesting point I asked him to incorporate it into the essay. Once again, he has done this succinctly yet transparently through a series of questions that reflect this self-doubt.

An already excellent essay has become that much better! I strongly support accepting this version.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: Brilliant. These Socratic questions are a wonderful and thought-provoking way of hinting at the uncertainties that often accompany major life decisions. They fit perfectly and, as I suggested in my earlier comments, prevent the essay from sounding too "pat." This is an extremely well-written, well-conceptualized, and well-executed essay that shows readers a "bridge across the divide," while not ignoring the challenges in the crossing. Thank you!