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Poetry in medicine – Another adjunct to improving Emotional Intelligence?

David Mathew

Department of Anaesthesia, Khoo Teck Puat Hospital, Singapore

Dear Editor,

I read with great interest the article entitled “The associates of Emotional Intelligence in medical students: A systematic review” (Edussuriya et al., 2022) in your journal published in October 2022. The association of Emotional Intelligence (EI) with wellbeing cannot be underestimated, especially with the plethora of positive effects it has on mental health and academic performance. In fact, I think this can be extended beyond students, to all healthcare professionals.

In my opinion, humanities in medicine provide a potentially novel way of improving emotional intelligence. The writer of a piece acknowledges the scientific experience that has moved him/her, and subsequently reflects on the entire experience through the arts and writing. The process of writing can be cathartic as it presents an avenue for the writer to release emotions that might have been pent-up or hidden as we provide a brave front to our patients. Once written, the piece can be shared, and reach out to other healthcare professionals who might have encountered similar experiences. Some may find comfort in reading such pieces, as they realise they are not alone in experiencing the roller-coaster of emotions in their daily lives.

I have appended a piece I wrote regarding my experience with an obstetrics patient and how sometimes the lesser said, the more it means. The process of writing and sharing this piece helped me better understand and appreciate what I went through and I hope it can do the same for fellow readers.

Cry

*The day I saw her cry
was when her baby's heart
slowed.*

*She needed the Caesarean
quickly.*

*Her eyes conceived tears
crawling down her cheeks
shaping into an anxious cry.
I counted the tears
and spoke more words
comforting, reassuring.*

*I saw her cry
one week later,
this time her littlest bundle
the greatest joy.*

*Tears of happiness
dancing muted screams of relief
I counted the tears
but spoke nothing
comforting, reassuring.*

*Tears
instead of words,*

won wars of emotions.
And staying silent
might be the most reassuring cry
of comfort.

Note on Contributor

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References

Edussuriya, D., Perera, S., Marambe, K., Wijesiriwardena, Y., & Ekanayake, K. (2022). The associates of Emotional Intelligence in medical students: A systematic review. *The Asia Pacific Scholar*, 7(4), 59–70.
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*David Mathew
Khoo Teck Puat Hospital,
90 Yishun Central, Singapore
Email: davidmathew3142@gmail.com