Narrative Based Medicine

Introduction

Today’s class offers something different, a chance to explore the power of Narrative in medicine through the vision and words of physicians who have discovered great benefit in being physician authors and poets. These physicians have discovered in writing a path to mindfulness and a way to deepen their own appreciation of the practice of medicine and the experience of illness and being a patient. We begin by asking you to explore the works of a well known author, the physician-poet William Carlos Williams. A group of students will present so works of Williams in the format of Readers Theater. We move from there to the experience of physician-poets who are members of our own faculty and finally to some works of prose and poetry authored by SUNY SOM students.

Objectives

At the end of this class you should be able to:
1. Explain how the example physicians have used written reflection to increase their level of mindfulness in their practice.
2. Explain the benefits of mindfulness and reflection to physicians and patients.
3. Explain current efforts to expand the relationship between medicine and humanities

Preparation

1. Listen to an audio presentation about Williams including the his own reading of several works Click Here -- If you are interested in learning more you can read a full biography Click Here
2. Read the two short articles on CBase
3. Explore http://www.virtualpoetryslam.com
4. Think about your own experience either as a medical student or patient, stories you have read, plays or programs you have watched and identify a story that has moved or inspired you.

Process

1. We begin in lecture with a presentation / reading of some works of William Carlos Williams.
2. Today Drs. Richard Bronson and Maria Basile will discuss their own experience of becoming physician – writers.
3. There is no small group session today.

Study Questions

1. Why study narrative?
2. How does narrative add to the traditional clinical focus of a patient interview?
Articles on File

1. Narrative Based Medicine, Why Study Narrative? Trisha Greenhalgh and Brian Hurwitz
2. Writing for Our Lives: Physician Narratives and Medical Practice
3. Optional:: An article about Physician-Poet Danielle Ofri Click Here