

Poetry

Ambivalence at 10 000 Feet

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Abstract

Description

The transition from medical neophyte to seasoned physician is a gradual process spanning the course of many years. However, there are various milestones throughout the experience that capture increases in decision-making capacity and responsibility, such as the switch from pre-clinical to clinical medical education. Medical students in their clinical years are endowed with an abundance of knowledge from their pre-clinical years and are just beginning to synthesize and apply that information to patient care. "Ambivalence at 10 000 Feet" captures a reflection of a third-year medical student on the theoretical decision to provide emergency medical care in the absence of other trained medical personnel.

Keywords

medical education; Hippocratic Oath; medical ethics; moral duty; self-efficacy; emergency treatment; medicine in the arts; humanities; poetry

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares he has no conflicts of interest.

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Ambivalence at 10 000 Feet

I often wonder
What I would do
If I'm on a plane
And a medical emergency ensues

A medical student I am
In the moment, resolution unsure
I think I know what I'm doing
But that's what residency is for

Sure, sure CPR and BLS trained
The algorithms in mind
Is there a doctor on board?
Not exactly, but I will not decline

Against inner turbulence, I will fly ahead
Cautiously confident
Heeding the call to action
Trusting my competence

In the stratosphere I ponder
The knowledge I've been endowed
I would choose to help
An oath in the clouds