

From the Editor

He walked out of the trauma room with the intern and slumped into a chair. He looked different to other seniors, the intern mused. Others are refined, even haughty. He looked resigned, defeated, vulnerable, perhaps even harried. It was the senior physician who broke the silence "Courage..." He paused. "Whoever thought courage is only on the battlefield never worked in the emergency department"..

Joe Neilson "Hearts of Lions"

It is tough being an emergency physician - or any physician in this country. We get paid about the same as bus drivers and considerably less than the best paid public workers – those in the electricity company. It seems that people would rather be unhealthy than sit in the dark.

Since most hospital based physicians earn about 26 shekels an hour for a day's work in high volume EDs and, since we have little prospect of increasing this, we are forced to find other ways to make ends meet.

Some younger physicians moonlight in EDs or work in the HMOs. HMO work is not really emergency work and moonlighting is really tough. Others make lucrative money by being expert witnesses. I, personally, have an ethical problem with this. Many attempt private work in other specialties for which they may be certified. This can be highly lucrative as well and I sometimes do this. I feel if you practice privately, occasionally at a discount or pro deo to the needy, this is a sign that you are an ethical and caring physician. Again, this is only my opinion. Problems occur when money is accepted from the drug industry. IAEM seldom uses this resource for dinners etc., at present. I have lectured once for MSD, but have also stopped this practice. It is acceptable but you should always reveal your sources. Be careful of what influences your practice and person. I also receive cash payments from Glaxo for a column I write in a local newspaper. Glaxo does not advertise in IJEM

"My Mama sent me to medical school to be independent, wealthy and have a carpeted office in the city. Instead, I am on roller skates being driven crazy by the sheer volume of patients that I can't possibly treat well at this pace. So why do I do it you ask? Simple, I love this land. G-d, I love these people"

Joe Nielson, "Hearts of Lions"

Sincerely Yours,

Joseph B. Leibman, MD
Editor in Chief