

A Satisfied Patient

Category: The Waiting Room

written by Kurt Stange | May 1, 2016

“Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh God! Oh my! Oh my! Oh my God! Ooooooh. 00000000H.”

I was sure that the groans of ecstasy must be piercing the exam room door and echoing off the waiting room walls.

“Oh. Oh. It feels so good! Ooooooooooh.”

My patient’s vocalizations persisted for the entire three minutes it took for more than a quart of urine to gush into the bag after I’d inserted a catheter.

I emptied the bag and told him to come back in two days, so that we could see if he still had problems after the effects of the atropine he’d had for his eye surgery* that morning had worn off. He was a bit unsteady on his feet, and I knew I’d have to walk him to his family in the waiting room.

Avoiding eye contact with the other patients, I delivered the man to his family.

When the last patient had left the evening clinic, I was quietly relieved. No one had asked for the same treatment that had caused the waiting room to echo with ecstasy.

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*Kurt Stange is a family physician whose patient was suffering from acute urinary retention—an inability to empty the bladder. This condition resulted most likely from a combination of two factors: the drugs he’d received during eye surgery, and an enlarged prostate.