

Primary heart

Le cœur des soins de santé en couleurs primaires

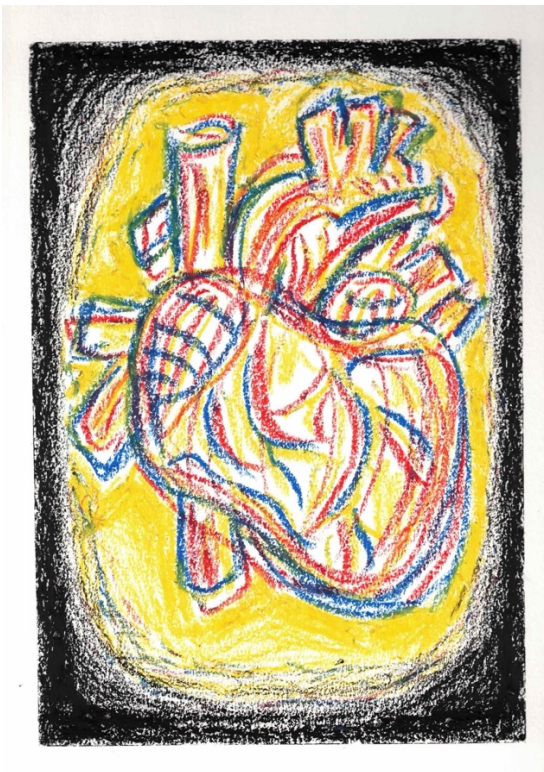
Savita Rani¹

¹University of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan, Canada

Correspondence to: Dr. Savita Rani; email: savita.rani@usask.ca

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This primary-coloured sketch in oil pastels embodies the idea that we can better, more empathetically care for our patients by understanding three “primary” elements at the heart of their lives - biological, psychological, and social. It reflects the fact that people are so much more than anatomic entities, that the psychological and social elements of their lives contribute critically to health and wellbeing. This concept is aptly expressed in the biopsychosocial model of patient care, which is a vital tool for medical trainees to learn and apply in their practices. T.P. Duffy, in his commentary on the Flexner Report on medical education, said that “the profession’s infatuation with the hyper-rational...created an excellence in science that was not balanced by a comparable excellence in clinical caring.”¹ I think this quote clearly expresses why it is so important that we expand our approach to patient care beyond the biomedical. We need to consider the “care” more deeply in healthcare, and this begins by laying strong foundations in medical training.

This image is paradoxical: the drawing itself is of an anatomic part, an organ, but through that initial image I am trying to encourage the viewer to look beyond the obvious physical form, and beyond the biomedical. This is an attempt to mirror what we may experience in the clinical setting. Our initial inclinations might be to focus on the anatomical and physical issues of our patients, but in order to be true healers we need to gather and understand the whole story of our patients.

Reference

1. Duffy TP. The Flexner Report--100 years later. *Yale J Biol Med.* 2011 Sep;84(3):269-76.