

Reflections of a Final Year Medical Student

Looking at my notes: "G22 P20." Hmm. . . . What did that mean again? Think—Something about pregnancy? That's right; she has been pregnant 22 times and has 20 kids. Wait. . . what? I did a quick double take to my page. But this staggering number was not only correct, it actually made sense. It was a note made on an Amish woman, a patient I saw while serving my rural Family Medicine Preceptorship.

A typical day for me making prenatal home visits in the Amish community: We begin by loading up our scale, blood pressure cuff, urine dip supplies, measuring tapes and Doppler. We set up our makeshift clinic in one of the homes along the "C" highway. A few minutes later the buggies start to roll up, with women and children in tow. My preceptor and I spend the morning measuring fundi, listening to fetal heart tones and checking cervixes. As noon approaches, I prepare for the questions that will surely come my way by my well-meaning patients. "So, dear, are you married yet?" While clearly expressing my desire to marry in the future, I explain I am a doctor in training and plan to complete medical school first. They just smile slyly to each other and bring out the homemade desserts.

My interaction with my Amish patients is more personal than most doctors will experience. For example, house calls are the norm, not the exception. One such call was at the home of an older gentleman who had recently suffered a stroke. His first wife had passed away in a buggy accident and he was left with their eight children. His new wife had recently delivered their first child together. After checking his blood pressure and spending some time chatting with him and his family, I left knowing that I had made a small difference in their lives, even if just for that day. And with each question I asked about how they were getting along, I was met with a question about myself. They made it known how wonderful they thought it was that a young woman was shortly going to be a doctor. And it is in this rural environment that I have found my place, my calling if you will. I am a family physician in the truest sense of the word. From a baby's first cry, through childhood and broken bones, to the joys and sorrows of adulthood, and finally to old age and the culmination of chronic disease I will be there for these patients. A family physician that becomes a part of each and every family I see.

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CME Answer Key

1a. b

1b. a

1c. a

1d. d

2a. d

2b. b

2c. a

2d. b

3a. a

3b. b

3c. d

3d. a

4a. d

4b. b

4c. d

4d. c

5a. a

5b. c

5c. b

5d. b