



A surgeon's paintbrush **Le pinceau du chirurgien**

Luckshi Rajendran

Volume 12, Number 5, 2021

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1083666ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36834/cmej.73661>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Canadian Medical Education Journal

ISSN

1923-1202 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this document

Rajendran, L. (2021). A surgeon's paintbrush. *Canadian Medical Education Journal / Revue canadienne de l'éducation médicale*, 12(5), 82–82.
<https://doi.org/10.36834/cmej.73661>

© Luckshi Rajendran, 2019



This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

érudit

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>

A surgeon's paintbrush Le pinceau du chirurgien

Luckshi Rajendran

¹Faculty of Medicine, University of British Columbia, British Columbia, Canada

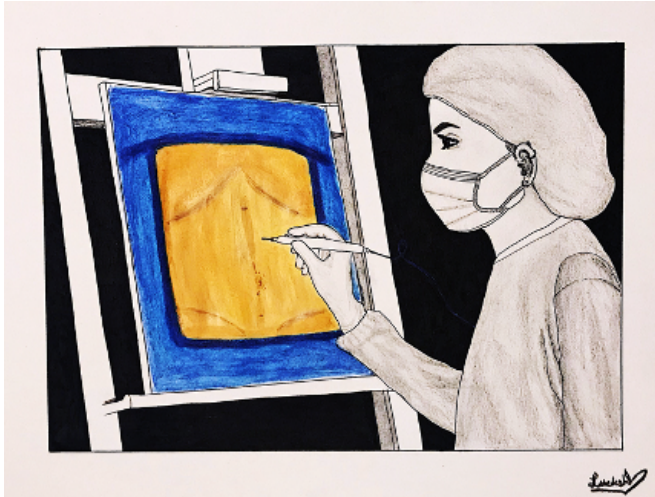
Correspondence to: Luckshi Rajendran; email: luckshi.rajendran@alumni.ubc.ca

Published ahead of issue: October 20, 2021 CMEJ 2021 Available at <http://www.cmej.ca>

© 2021 Rajendran; licensee Synergies Partners

<https://doi.org/10.36834/cmej.73661>. This is an Open Journal Systems article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License.

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0>) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.



There is an unspoken art to medicine and surgery. Over the course of medical training, the emphasis is often placed on acquiring scientific knowledge to become a medical expert. This helps to meet standardized exam requirements and clinical competencies, with the expected objective of producing competent and safe physicians. However, much of medicine relies on the humanistic side of the profession. It is the ability to “relieve suffering and heal the sick” that defines the purpose of medicine. The last few years of my training as a surgical resident has consolidated this – every patient’s joy, sorrow, and frustration are the artistic fuel for our determination to succeed.

Often times, medicine involves framing the clinical context of a patient encounter. It requires having the tough conversations: the best-case, worst-case scenario discussions. It involves empathy: listening to a patient’s narrative and understanding their wishes and beliefs. It is the art of the conversation, and the art of timing within the decision-making process. It is knowing when to intervene, and when to let go. It is the art of trust of the patient under your hands, as you wield the scalpel and do the final time out before first skin incision. It is also in the art of creativity and innovation, in a relentless pursuit for solutions. Holistically, much of medicine is an art, and we as physicians and surgeons are the artists holding the brush and canvas.