A Radiologist’s Art in CT Images

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ABSTRACT

The story of medical imaging starts on 8 Nov, 1895, when Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen accidentally discovered X rays. Since then it has undergone great technological advancements helping physicians create images of the human body to reveal, diagnose, or examine disease (X-ray, n.d). CT scans combine the use of computers and x-rays to create virtual ‘slices’ of what is inside our body without cutting it open. Earlier many diseases could only be confirmed at autopsy. In 2010, more than 5 billion medical imaging studies were completed done worldwide (X-ray computed tomography, n.d).

Keywords: Computed Tomography (CT) Scan, Empathy, Haiku, Images, Paintings

Technology has made us better scientist-doctors but it has widened the divide between the art and science of medicine both at the personal and professional levels. Humanities bring us closer to illness, allows us to reflect on it and in the process help in healing both our patients and ourselves. We become better physicians. At the same time our medical experiences inspire creativity. The visual arts have been used to accentuate our powers of observation, change our perspectives and develop better clinical sense (Glatter, 2013).

“Training the Eye,” is an elective course taught at Brigham and Women’s Hospital, to bring students to the Museum of Fine Arts and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum to practice observation and clinical reasoning skills (Campbell, 2013).

Physician and artist Satre Stuelke of the Radiology Art project has used radiology in a creative way to make it easier for patients to relate to the radiology procedures they undergo through a deeper visualization of everyday objects (Schaffer, 2009).

Radiologist Kai-hung Fung makes beautiful and informative art from the CT scans of his patients, digitally manipulating them to look more appealing (Window on the body, 2009). While Judith K. McMillan and many others, use an X-ray machine as camera to photograph the internal structures of inanimate objects to reveal their inner beauty (McMillan, n. d.; Poh, n. d.)

These beautiful images show us that the boundaries between art and science are illusory and medical graduates with a background of humanities or humanities as electives in the medical school can do much to bring back the art in the practice of medicine (Smith, 1994).

Talking of humanities in medicine we would also like to share a Haiku written in response to these images by one of our reviewers Dr Priyank Jain which has the distinction of being s one of our shortest IJUDH reviews:

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See Thee in CT
Eyes find what mind knows.
Just tell me what you see, And
I can see your mind.

Haiku (Haiku, n.d.) is one of the most important form of traditional Japanese poetry. Haiku is a 17-syllable verse form consisting of three metrical units of 5, 7, and 5 syllables. They have been used for training medical students to be reflective and develop empathy. More medical haikus can be enjoyed at http://www.pulsemagazine.org/archive/haiku and http://www.pallimed.org/2012/09/hospice-and-palliative-haiku.html

A computed tomography (CT) scan is an imaging method that uses x-rays to create pictures of cross-sections of the body with few complications like allergic reaction to contrast dye or exposure to radiation (Shaw A S, 2008). Vision is the art of seeing things invisible. Here, Dr Piyudev, a radiologist, looks at discarded CT images (Figure 1 through Figure 6) with a new perspective and attempts to create new meaning from them.

Figure 1. A lady in Burka (lungs)
An Evaluation of Laboratory Information Systems in Medical Laboratories in Jamaica