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ART OF MEDICINE

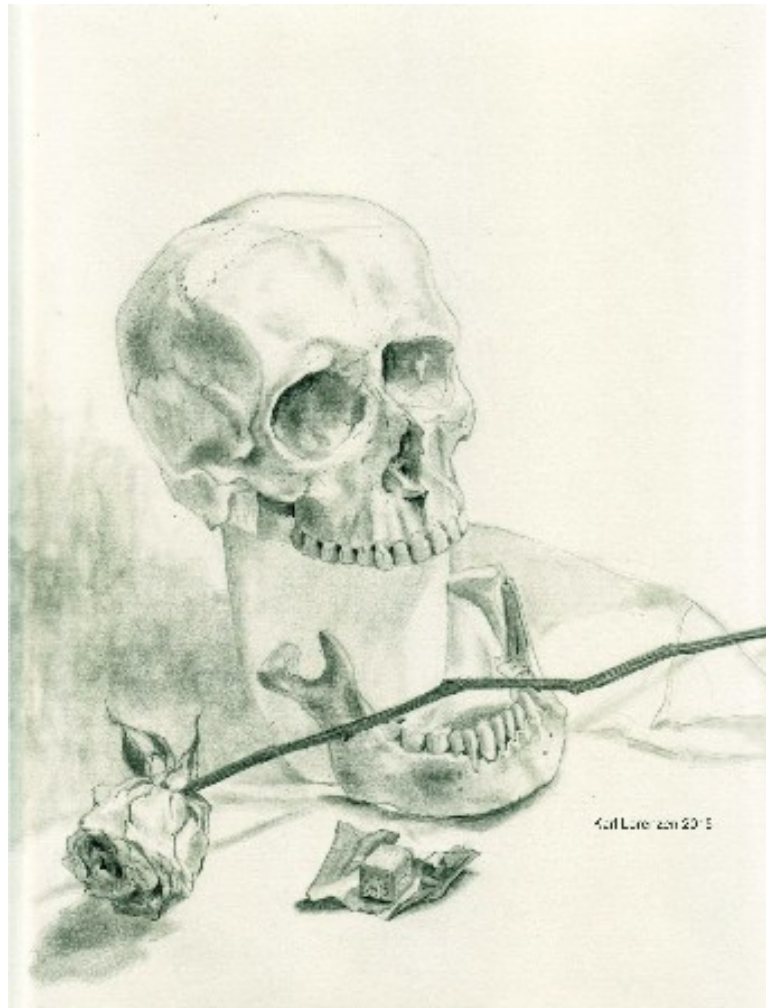
Balance of Principles

Artwork and captions by Karl Lorenzen

Abstract

Each work in this collection explores, from patients' or their loved ones' points of view, balance between patients' experiences and one or more of 4 well-known principles of ethics in health care.

Figure 1. *Portrait*, by Karl Lorenzen



Media

Graphite on paper.

Caption

Patients can be frightened by clinical instruments in close proximity to their faces. The principles of nonmaleficence and beneficence suggest the importance of both minimizing fear as a source of harm and cultivating the hope of good outcomes in specific clinical encounters. Once maxillofacial or dental pain is alleviated, for example, some grateful patients might offer flowers to staff; a rose is a symbol of beauty and impermanence, a reminder of benefits' triumph over the risks and fears endured to achieve good outcomes.

Figure 2. *Some Other Spring*, by Karl Lorenzen



Media

Graphite on paper.

Caption

Chemotherapy is considered treatment in the best interests of a cancer patient. Although a patient might choose chemotherapy autonomously, anti-nausea medication is needed to make the benefits of treatment tolerable. In this drawing, a patient's iatrogenic hair loss meant her curlers were put aside for a while. The wood beads and straw necklace symbolizes body adornment: it is an attempt to salvage the self-esteem lost with the hair.

Figure 3. *At Last*, by Karl Lorenzen



Media

Graphite on paper.

Caption

A justice concern is that patients without insurance or adequate insurance must wait awhile to save enough to have dental work done. When the opportunity arises, at last, they can be relieved of pain or discomfort. Health insurance for a person who is ill is like a pencil sharpener for a pencil: without it, a person needing medical treatment, like an unsharpened pencil, might not function well. The balloon weight is a symbol of festivity; patients “celebrate” obtaining health insurance (“at last!”). And the sprig of baby’s breath signifies purity and freedom from corruption.

Karl Lorenzen is a professional artist who exhibits and teaches at cultural, educational, health, and holistic learning centers in New York State. Formerly a faculty member of the New York Open Center and Anthroposophy NYC, he is currently a teaching artist in residence at the Omega Institute in Rhinebeck, New York. His artwork has been published in numerous sources and was included in exhibitions at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center inFUSION Gallery, and the United Nations headquarters.

Citation

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Conflict of Interest Disclosure

The author had no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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