ART OF MEDICINE
Imposter Syndrome
Rebecca S. Kimyon, MD

Abstract
This self-portrait, done in bold colors, depicts the experience of “imposterhood” in medicine.

Figure. Imposter Syndrome

Media
Sharpie markers and colored pencil on poster board.
Imposter syndrome is a real and uncomfortable feeling for many of us who find ourselves in the midst of talented and accomplished people. This was certainly the case for me as I started my journey in medicine, constantly comparing myself to others and worrying that I did not measure up.

Imposter syndrome in medicine is a topic most often discussed from a serious psychological point of view. The use of cartoon humor, however, makes the concept of “imposterhood” accessible and understandable in an immediate and nonthreatening way. The drawing tries to capture at a glance medical students’ universal feeling of insecurity: “Am I good enough? Is my disguise working? Are people going to find out that I’m not what I should be?” At the same time, the picture shows that the artist is laughing at herself, recognizing the silliness of her disguise in the midst of a room full of people trying to disguise themselves as well. The lightheartedness and visual immediacy of the cartoon capture a kernel of truth and irony that a narrative essay could not—it allows us to laugh at ourselves, reflect on imposter syndrome as a common human experience, and perhaps breathe a sigh of relief that we are not alone.

References

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Citation

DOI

Conflict of Interest Disclosure
The author(s) had no conflicts of interest to disclose.

The viewpoints expressed in this article are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the AMA.

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ISSN 2376-6980