

AMA Journal of Ethics®

March 2021, Volume 23, Number 3: E264-266

ART OF MEDICINE

Cautious Curiosity

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Abstract

Optimal health care is nearly impossible for patients who have few or no languages in common with their clinicians because it is hard to exchange information and questions about interventions' risks and benefits and about how to motivate good health outcomes. This digital drawing considers an elderly patient with limited English proficiency who understands and who wears a mask.

Figure. *Cautious Eyes*



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Media

Digital drawing.

Caption

Communication is vital in patient-clinician relationships. Patients with **limited English proficiency** experience poor clinical outcomes, restricted access to care, and reduced satisfaction with their health services.^{1,2,3} During the COVID-19 pandemic, language barriers' effects on uptake of public health and safety messaging⁴ underscored the importance of interpreters' roles in providing high-quality health care and access to information all patients need.³ This digital drawing shows an elder, masked Sikh community member who appears to be following COVID-19 safety precautions, despite language or cultural barriers. Her eyes suggest her cautious demeanor and perhaps curiosity about what the unmasked don't understand.

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Editor's Note

The page numbers and doi are subject to change when the March 2021 issue in which this article will appear is published.

Citation

AMA J Ethics. 2021;23(3):E264-266.

DOI

10.1001/amajethics.2021.264.

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.