

Episode: *Author Interview: “Overcoming Pseudo-stoicism in Medicine”*

Guest: Jamaljé R. Bassue

Host: Tim Hoff

Transcript by: Cheryl Green

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[bright theme music]

TIM HOFF (HOST): Welcome to another episode of the Author Interview series from the *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*. I’m your host, Tim Hoff. This series provides an alternative way to access the interesting and important work being done by Journal contributors each month. Joining me on this episode is Jamaljé R. Bassue, a fourth-year medical student at the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine in Oklahoma City. He’s here to discuss his short film, *You Might Be Here Awhile*, in the May 2023 issue of the Journal, [Interprofessional Education and Innovation](#). Jamaljé, thank you so much for being on the podcast.

JAMALJÉ BASSUE: Well, thank you so much for having me, Tim. It’s a honor to be here, and I’d really like to thank you all for your time.

HOFF: So, what is the main ethics point of your short film?

BASSUE: Well, I’d say the main ethical point of the film is, at its core, the film dissects the concept of pseudo-stoicism or the fake stoicism that is almost mandatory in health care education systems today. The key ethical point from the article that accompanies it is this dissection of the potential conflict that exists between the traditional expectation of pseudo-stoicism in medicine and the important ethical principles for empathy and emotional intelligence. And so, the article and the film draws light to the harmful effects of pseudo-stoicism on the physician/patient dynamic. And it’s also this call to action for health professionals to recognize and address this conflict.

HOFF: So, what do you see as the most important thing for your fellow health professions students and trainees to take from your piece?

BASSUE: Of course. I think it’s always kind of funny to give my peers some advice, but the one thing that I want people to take away from this is that they should never feel compelled to suppress their emotions and suppress their empathy as a way to appear more professional or competent, within reason, of course.

HOFF: Hmm.

BASSUE: It is even more important for providers to cultivate this sort of empathy and emotional intelligence, which could both enhance patient care and avoid the consequences that come with emotional suppression on their own well-being in both their professional and their personal lives.

HOFF: And finally, if you could add a point to your piece that you didn’t have the time or space to fully explore, what would that be?

BASSUE: I guess something else that I’d like to dissect out a little bit more is there is the role of the institution, and there’s also the role of other cultural factors that combine together to

perpetuate and continue propagating this expectation of pseudo-stoicism in the medical profession. And I truly believe a shift in attitudes and values is warranted at both the, well, at both the personal, the institutional level, and the organizational level, and even the societal level, to promote a more humane and compassionate approach to health care delivery. [theme music returns] I think the combination of all these things and shifts in how we think about these things will eventually lead us down a path of improved health care in the future.

HOFF: Jamaljé, thank you so much for your time on the podcast today and thanks for your contribution to the Journal this month.

BASSUE: Well, thank you so much, and I can't thank you all enough for the opportunity.

HOFF: To read the full article as well as the rest of this month's issue for free, visit our site, JournalOfEthics.org. We'll be back soon with more *Ethics Talk* from the *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics*.