



The teaching point

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It started shortly after your birth. Groups of curious residents and medical students gathered around your isolette to feel your liver, learn what jaundice looked like, and discussed the difference between conjugated and unconjugated bilirubin.

When you had your Kasai procedure, a surgical resident prepared by studying the anatomy of the hepatobiliary system and the abnormalities associated with biliary atresia. The resident eagerly assisted the attending in performing the surgical correction and learned the steps of this complicated procedure.

Every time you came for an outpatient visit another student, another resident, another nurse saw your scars and learned your story.

As you grew older and developed heart

failure, more learners were taught how to listen for a murmur, what pitting edema looked like, and how to read an electrocardiogram.

Although we didn't know it would be your last admission, we kept learning. When you spiked fevers in the emergency department we learned what broad-spectrum antibiotics were the best to start empirically. As you repeatedly got poked, prodded, and retold your story countless times, you answered with a smile. For just ten years old, you had been through it all, and put up with so much.

Even as you became septic and needed to be intubated the fellow was reminded of the right tube size, depth, and vent settings. We learned about the different types of shock and which category you presented in. As your blood pressures started to soften, we

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learned about vasopressors and selected ones we hoped would be most effective.

Despite our best efforts we unfortunately couldn't save you. But even after your death, you kept teaching us. You taught us in the case analysis how we can better our detection of patients who may be septic and how to expedite the transition of

decompensating patients from the general floor to the intensive care unit.

I know I will always remember your smile, your bravery, and grace in even the worst of situations. While in just ten years you taught so many so much, I'm sorry it was you that we had to learn from. I'm sorry this happened to you. I'm sorry you had to be a teaching point.
