



## Art - the heart of medicine

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Medicine without art is mere words – prose can never hope to embody a science as artistic as medicine.

Can you imagine Gray's Anatomy without images?

Would you grant Leonardo da Vinci only words?

One cannot and would not, because the ties that link art to medicine and medicine to art are as absolute as they are intangible. And as enduring – from da Vinci's detailed anatomical drawings in the 1400s, to Sir Harold Gillies in the 1900s,[1] and – closer to home – Subodh Kerkar and Gieve Patel in the 21st century.[2,3]

It is no coincidence that these two dispositions – the one of healer and the other of artist – coexist; both depend on an eye for detail, on an intricate knowledge of anatomy and architecture, on creativity, on discipline and

perseverance, and both originate in compassion for their fellow beings.[4-6] How one affects the other is a matter that consumes the intellectual community – art as therapy for patients, and for their healers;[4] art to help medical students learn observational skills, critical analysis, and compassion;[7,8] art for medical practitioners to self-reflect;[4] art to train the hand in fine motor skills befitting surgery;[1] or art simply to develop a balanced world view.

In Sir Osler's words: "But do not get too deeply absorbed [in your work] to the exclusion of all outside interests. Success in life depends as much upon the [person] as on the physician. Mix with your fellow students, mingle with their sports and their pleasures. ... You are to be members of a polite as well as of a liberal profession and the more you see of life outside the narrow circle of your work the better equipped you will be for the struggle." [9]

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Graphic Medicine is a newer, artistic way of looking at the human condition; medical educators find that comics are a useful medium to examine the interfaces and interactions between patients, care providers and doctors.[10]

The field is evolving and growing, and gaining momentum in India as well. We

are looking to share educator and student experiences with the arts in medical education. Do consider submitting your stories and images to RHiME. As a beginning, our in-house physician-artist, Dr Apurba Rajbongshi, describes what inspired him to paint the current cover – the painting is eloquently titled “Compassion and Kindness”.[11]

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