

## THE ROLE OF JOKES IN THE TEACHING OF ANATOMY

A paper presented by Dr. E. N. Obikili of the Department of Anatomy, College of Medicine, University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus during the 7th Scientific Conference of the Anatomical Society of South South and South East Nigeria (ASSEN) held at Calabar, Nigeria.

### Introduction

Anatomy as it is known today has a wider scope than mere "cutting up". It is the foundation of the whole art of medicine and it introduces the student to most of the medical terminologies including medical jokes. Anatomy is vast and the founding fathers of anatomy were versatile. Since anatomy is the foundation of medicine, anatomists have to be at the fore front of medical education.

Anatomists have to make the teaching of anatomy lively. They have to make the knowledge of anatomy relevant in clinical practice, sports, social life etc. Anatomists have to continue to widen the horizons of anatomy in these days of molecular biology. Anatomy is very interesting. However, it is voluminous and may be volatile. When you stop studying it, it leaves you. It does not waste time on those who do not have time for it. You have to bear with it. It is the foundation of medicine.

Medical education is dynamic. Even if we have been teaching anatomy for over a quarter of a century we will continue to learn how to teach our students in better ways. Since our students have come from various backgrounds, we have to try various teaching methods and choose the ideal one for each group of students. Well selected relevant jokes help the students to relax in class, and to retain and recall what they are taught. Jokes help to make anatomy ridiculously easy. Jokes help to make the learning of anatomy a fun'

Question and answer, Q & A, interactive sessions, along an inclined plane, starting with what is very obvious to what is less obvious, excite the interest of students. This method was used by Morel in the Sadness of Christ and Lewis<sup>2</sup> in Screw tape Letters.

### Joke I: TUTORIAL

Teacher: What is 23 plus 7

SS I Student: I do not KNOW

Teacher: What is N23 plus N7

SS I Student: N30

### Joke II: STAY TOGETHER AND REJOICE (STAR)

MRA: Why is it that many medical students are asked to withdraw from the Faculty of Medicine after the 2nd MB BS examination?

MRI: In the past, few medical students were advised to withdraw from studying medicine but these days the number has increased remarkably.

MRA: Why is it so?

MRI: There are many theories: some students cheat at examination halls, some get someone else to sit the examinations for them; some get involved unduly in extracurricular activities and miss their lectures and practicals etc.

MRA: I know many students who were not guilty of the reasons you enumerated above who still did not pass the 2nd MB BS examinations

MRI: You are right. In the past students had very conducive accommodation, airconditioned study rooms, good lecture halls, three square meals etc. These days the lecture halls are over crowded, accommodation facilities are grossly inadequate and far from being comfortable, strikes by academic and non academic staff, NEPA, Water corporation etc, and strife by students are a common occurrence.

MRA: What do you think of the commitment of lecturers these days when compared with what was obtainable in the 70s and 80s.



**MRI:** Things have fallen apart.

**MRA:** Do you think that examiners should lower the standards of examinations since they are also partly to be blamed for the large number of students withdrawing from studying medicine?

**MRI:** Medicine has to do with life. Lowering the standards of examinations in medicine may lead to lowering of the standard of life

**MRA:** Why is it that some Nigerians that drop out of medical schools in Nigeria and travel to USA end up doing well academically over there?

**MRI:** The height one attends in life is a product of nature and nurture. If someone is a genius but is frustrated by those who should motivate him, he may end up being a dropout in Nigeria but a star in USA.

**MRA:** Do you like stars?

**MRI:** Yes I do. We need stars in this country. We have to produce more stars in this country. I believe in stars. I am a fan of stars

**MRA:** You have used the word star in different ways. What does star stand for?

**MRI:** Star means different things to different people. Some people are not stars but it gives them joy to contribute towards the production of stars. Some are not stars but they see themselves as stars.

**MRA:** What does STAR mean for a good medical student? **MRI:** Stay Together and Read \*

Stay Together and Revise \*

Stay Together and Rejoice \*

**MRA:** What does it mean for a lecturer? **MRI:** Stay Together And Research \*

Stay Together and Reason \* Stay Together And Rejoice \*

**MRA:** What meaning does it have for those outside the ivory tower?

**MRI:** Stay Together and Reconcile \* Stay Together And Relax \* Stay Together And Rejoice \*

**MRA:** I am beginning to like stars

**MRI:** You better do. A little bit of alcohol is good for the stomach

**MRA:** A friend of mine thinks that it is a sin to take any alcohol including STAR beer.

**MRI:** If he or she is a Christian you can ask him to read the following passages in the Scripture:

1. JN 4:46 He went again to Cana in Galilee, where he had changed the water into Wine.
2. LK 7:33-34 For John the Baptist comes, not eating bread, not drinking wine, and you say, "He is possessed". The Son of Man comes, eating and drinking, and you say, "Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners"
3. ACTS 2: 13 Some, however, laughed it off 'They have been drinking too much new wine' they said.
4. ITM 5:23 You should give up drinking only water and have a little wine for the sake of your digestion and the frequent bouts of illness that you have.
5. ITM 3:8 In the same way, deacons must be respectable men whose word can be trusted, moderate in the amount of wine they drink and with no squalid greed for money.

**MRA:** What if my friend is not interested in reading the Scriptures?

**MRI:** Invite him to an igba nkwu ceremony of your relation so that he or she can be an eye-witness to what our forefathers handed on to us.

**MRA:** Do you think everyone should drink alcohol?

**MRI:** No. Some people do not drink alcohol because of health or religious reasons; others do not because they do not like the taste or for some other reason. Some people who take alcohol may opt not to take it for some days or weeks or during the entire period of Lent as purification. Marriage is something very good but St Paul and many holy men and women gave it up for the kingdom of God.

**MRA:** Some people are addicted to alcohol and that has ruined many families.

**MRI:** You are right. Many families have been ruined financially, morally or physically because of excessive drinking of alcohol. There has to be moderation in eating and drinking. People have to drink responsibly. They should not drink to the extent of seeing stars. Sex is something good but it becomes a bad thing when it is abused. Premarital or extramarital sex is a deadly sin just as driving when someone is



drunk is deadly.

**MRA:** When does a person begin to see stars?

**MRI:** The person who sees stars is one who is drunk, dreaming, delirious or has received a dirty slap on his face

**MRA:** What do you think of a person that sees himself as a star?

**MRI:** I think that he is either drunk with pride or crazy.

**MRA:** What do you suggest to those that drink a lot?

**MRI:** I suggest that those that drink a lot should go for an overhaul of their GIT system so that it can become beer efficient. The Peugeot 404 and 504 cars literally drink a lot of fuel. If you are making a trip from Enugu to Lagos you may need to refill the tank when you get to Benin. The new models of cars are fuel efficient. A bottle of fuel can be sufficient for a day or couple of days. One or two bottles of beer can suffice for a day or couple of days if the GIT is beer efficient.

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#### References

1. More, T., The Sadness of Christ, Scepter Publishers, New York, 1997
2. Lewis, C. S., Screwtape letters, HarperCollins Publishers, New York, 2004