



EDITORIAL

A detour into the past

I was making the 2-hour trip from our annual Ohio Academy of Family Physicians meeting in Columbus back home to Cincinnati. I calculated carefully and I would only have to detour a half-hour. I told myself it really wasn't out of the way. And after all, it would be a treat for everyone. Well, we all have our petty rationalizations. But I'll always detour for delicatessen.

As I reflected on my motivations, and the reasons why pastrami, corned beef, and other heart-healthy alternatives such as half-done Kosher dills were perfectly appropriate additions to my diet—not to mention the rugelah (a tempting pastry full of cream cheese, confectioner's sugar, and fruit filling)—I stepped into the deli and began a journey reaching back well over a century.

Walking into a delicatessen is like revisiting family gatherings at my grandparents—the rye breads and challah, gefilte fish and herring, knishes and kugel. I recall long-dead relatives and simpler times when a long meal with a vast collection of cousins and family was routine. Maybe our lives were slower-paced. I guess it is why we have big Sunday dinners on a regular basis.

As I hoisted a bag brimming with the makings of a first-class spread, I had a pang of guilt. What will my family physician do when he sees my elevated blood pressure or wonders how my sugars have been? I guess I'll just have to blame it on nostalgia and trying to recapture a bit of my past.

The wise family physician understands. One of the "50 Years in Medicine" honorees at our state academy meeting captured this wisdom well. After a busy week of house calls and ministering to the sick, he was dog-tired and only wanted to take a well-deserved nap. In an effort to divert his son, the doctor took a magazine ad and cut it up to serve as a puzzle. Satisfied that this diversion would allow a deep and restful slumber, he was surprised to be awoken only 10 minutes later.

When the doctor asked how he had put together the puzzle so quickly, his son replied it was easy. The opposite side had a picture of a person in the center, and once you had the picture of the person, it was easy to fill in the rest of the pieces. It's like that with family medicine. Once you know the whole person and his family, it's easy to put the rest of the pieces together.

Now, excuse me while I have a hot pastrami sandwich.

Jeff Susman, MD
Editor, JFP

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Direct editorial information and inquiries to:

EDITORIAL OFFICE

Health Professions Building, Department
of Family Medicine, PO Box 670582,
Cincinnati, OH 45267-0582.

Telephone: (513) 558-4021.

PUBLISHING OFFICES

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