

A Holiday Visit to the ED

(With Apologies to Clement Clarke Moore)

'Twas the night before New Year, when all through the land
Every ED was busy—Can you give us a hand?
Treating chest pains, and traumas, and hot swollen knees,
While clinics were shuttered, along with UCs.
The handoffs were done with hardly a frown,
In hopes that the volume soon would slow down.
Babies were nestled all snug in a sheet,
Watching sutures applied to their hands and their feet.
And amateur athletes unpadded, uncapped,
Had brains that were rattled after balls had been snapped.
When out on the deck there arose such a clatter
We sprang from the doc box to help with the matter.
To Resusc room 1 we flew in a flash,
Tearing open the curtain before the patient could crash.
The leads on the breast of the now-fallen fellow,
Made lustrous white circles near sclerae bright yellow.
When what to our wondering ears did we hear,
But an overhead page that inspired some fear:
Notifications of a Level 1 trauma,
And several ODs, to add to the drama.
More rapid than eagles the new patients came,
All victims of poisons with rather strange names:
Poinsettia, and holly, and dried mistletoe,
Angel hair, leaded tinsel, polyacrylate snow.
And a man who was tarnished with ashes and soot,
With a cherry red color from his head to his foot.
Smoke inhalation and a toxic epoxide?
Or alcohol, cyanide, carbon monoxide?
But “Holiday Poisonings” on the pages ahead,
Soon reassured us we had nothing to dread...

When patients were discharged to families waiting,
They promised to give us all a good rating.
So to all EMTs, NPs, and PAs,
RNs, and EPs who work holidays,
And to all ED staffs who “fight the good fight,”
Have a Happy New Year, and a nice quiet night!

—Neal Flomenbaum, MD



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