

Afflicted with Wishes for Change

By Dustin Willis, PT, DPT

I'm so frustrated...
too many doctor's visits
seem to end like this--
Being sent away,
little said about what might
be going on & what to do about it.

Don't get me wrong,
I know as well as anyone
the ambiguity that comes
with medical practice.

All I'm saying is
It would be nice to see
some consistency--
actually addressing
parents' concerns,
stressing the fact
that their son can't tolerate
any food or liquid
without vomiting
or tears from pain.

I'd just LIKE humanity to be
The rule in healthcare,
not the exception.

Don't even get me started on the lack
of clinical reasoning & critical thinking
when they arrive at a "diagnosis"
in five minutes with no formal assessment.

I get it.
We're all just guessing.
But at least put forth some effort.

That's what I don't understand.
Is it that you're overwhelmed
by having to see too many patients
in too little time?

Is it a failure of academia--
how they perpetuate the notion
that medicine is merely
an applied science?

It only reinforces my opinion
Piemonte's *Afflicted*
should be required reading
for every healthcare provider
in all fields.

It's a bit surreal
to have to deal with this so often
but then, unfortunately,
simultaneously, not surprising.

Tears fill my eyes.
I'm at a loss for words
as I sit here and watch him
grimace & squirm
from discomfort and hunger.

You all want to know what this rare-warrior medically-complex trach life is REALLY like to start off this “Trach Awareness Week?”

It’s days and nights when you’re left to think & troubleshoot on your own, disenchanted from the countless questions with no answers, from lack of compassion when it matters most.

It’s advocating and fighting and pretending to be strong while you struggle to juggle being a nurse, physician, respiratory/physical/occupational/speech therapist etc etc etc all without formal training (except for one, in my case).

I’m so frustrated, though I don’t have time to be. Solving the issue is now up to me and my little family alone after wasting time and resources trying to find the kind of care that has grown so elusive within this broken system.

About the Author



Dustin Willis PT, DPT is an Assistant Professor in the West Coast University Doctor of Physical Therapy program, where his focus is on teaching all the musculoskeletal content and injecting some of the humanities into healthcare through his Sociocultural Aspects of Human Interaction course. He is a Board-Certified Clinical Specialist in Orthopaedic Physical Therapy and a Fellow of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Manual Physical Therapists. When not in the classroom, he treats patients with Quantum Performance, a private concierge service provider that focuses on helping professional athletes to perform at the highest level possible. He is nearing completion of his dissertation, which is aimed at exploring the underlying psycho-neuro-endocrine-immunologic mechanism of providing compassionate care. Most importantly, he spends most of his time focused on raising his four-year-old medically complex, special needs son, Dorian Kahlil, who is the inspiration behind everything he does.