

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The death of a Titan

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"I swear by Apollo the Physician, by Asclepius, by Hygieia, by Panacea, and by all the gods and goddesses, making them my witnesses, that I will carry out, according to my ability and judgment, this oath and this indenture.

To hold my teacher in this art equal to my own parents; to make him partner in my livelihood; when he is in need of money to share mine with him; to consider his family as my own brothers, and to teach them this art, if they want to learn it, without fee or indenture; to impart precept, oral instruction, and all other instruction to my own sons, the sons of my teacher, and to indentured pupils who have taken the physician's oath, but to nobody else.

I will use treatment to help the sick according to my ability and judgment, but never with a view to injury and wrong-doing. Neither will I administer a poison to anybody when asked to do so, nor will I suggest such a course. Similarly, I will not give to a woman a pessary to cause abortion. But I will keep pure and holy both my life and my art. I will not use the knife, not even, verily, on sufferers from stone, but I will give place to such as are craftsmen therein.

Into whatsoever houses I enter, I will enter to help the sick, and I will abstain from all intentional wrong-doing and harm, especially from abusing the bodies of man or woman, bond or free. And whatsoever I shall see or hear in the course of my profession, as well as outside my profession in my intercourse with men, if it be what should not be published abroad, I will never divulge, holding such things to be holy secrets.

Now if I carry out this oath, and break it not, may I gain for ever reputation among all men for my life and for my art; but if I break it and forswear myself, may the opposite befall me." Translation by W.H.S. Jones - Hippocrates of Cos (1923). "The Oath". Loeb Classical Library. 147:298–299.

These words sound familiar. Why? Because everyone of us made that vow.

Yes, it is 2000 years old or more but, even today, it

is topical. I wonder if it is applied these days. Or maybe it was forgotten ... Let's see.

"To hold my teacher in this art equal to my own parents [...]"

I'm sure that everybody forgot this passage because in my daily practice I do not hear too many words of appreciation about elders, teachers or even our colleagues. Yes, we can learn from each other and there should be a greater respect between us. If not, why do we expect RESPECT from media and patients?

"Into whatsoever houses I enter, I will enter to help the sick [...]"

Nowadays patients seek doctor's help. But they cannot obtain this if the doctors are locked behind the doors. In Bucharest, Romania, there are mainly 5 ENT emergency rooms. Why do you use the pandemic as an excuse not to see patients? Some of the patients are badly treated or left to fate. Is it a good attitude to treat a patient with epistaxis like being a "thing"? Or not to see a patient with peritonsillar abscess? Ok, I know there is an official paper that established the Hospitals with ERs, but, when you, as a first line ER Hospital, refuse a patient with acute respiratory insufficiency, how do you feel?

"I will use treatment to help [...]"

When you do your shift in the Emergency Room, do you have all the possibilities to treat the patient? I think the management and Ministry of Health should read this oath too. How can you decide that a hospital should be designated for emergencies but it is not multidisciplinary? How can you put some doctors in the first line without "weapons"? Without protective gears, without the right tools. Every year we do the "necessary", but this necessary is the same every time with the hope that some miracles will happen.

So, in my opinion, the Titans are those doctors who do the job they were meant to do (sorry, not the job but "the call"). They work hard, they work well, they are titans. Are you one of them? Please read again the Hippocratic Oath.