

THE BEST MEDICINE

The Heart of the Matter

Many years ago, I was a keen young locum for an established family doctor. One day, I was doing a routine check on a prenatal patient in her sixth month. I did the usual blood pressure and fetal palpitation, while amusing the patient with my banter. She looked quite annoyed, however, at being examined by a doctor who looked like a goofy teenager.

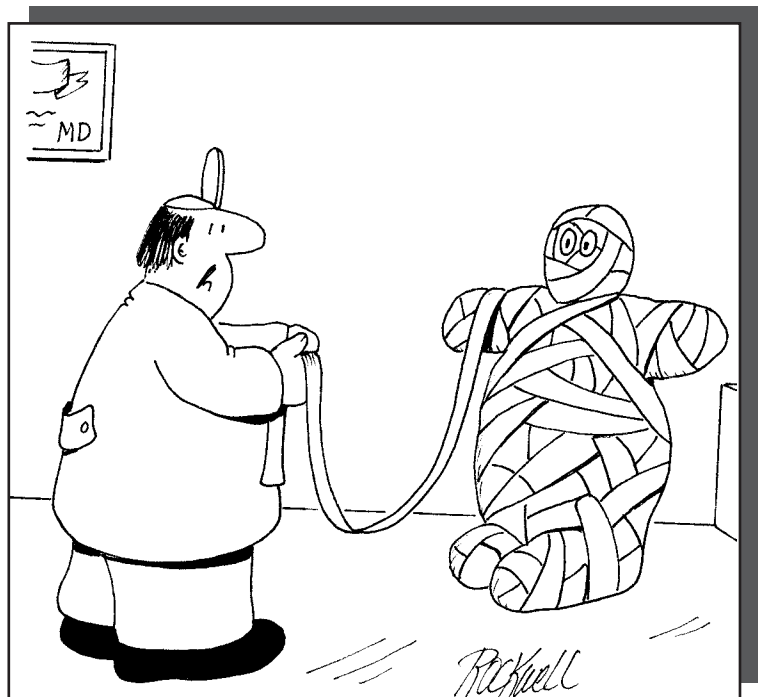
I checked the fetal heart with my stethoscope and was satisfied all was well.

“Aren’t you going to listen to the baby with the machine, like the *real* doctor always does?” she asked.

“Well of course I am,” I replied. I looked around the room and noticed a large fetal doppler machine in the corner. I confidently grabbed the wand and turned the power switch on. I remember being impressed by the technological hum and the movement of the arrows in the little dials. I lubed up her belly and applied the wand. For the life of me, I couldn’t get a heart beat. After a few minutes, I began to perspire as the patient became more anxious. Just then, the baby moved. “Well it must be OK,” I thought. “The damn machine must be broken.”

Upon closer look at the machine, I noticed the words *therapeutic ultrasound*. I had just given the fetus an ultrasound treatment! As I began to panic I noticed the real

This item was sent in by Dr. David Richardson Langley from British Columbia.



“Do you want me to pull it off fast or slow?”

fetal doppler nearby. I regained my composure and calmly said to the patient, “Well, we might as well use this smaller one, as the big one seems to be broken.”

In case you’re wondering, there is no fee code for fetal physiotherapy treatments.

Have you ever been in a funny medical-related situation that you’d like to share with your peers? Send us your 150- to 200-word contribution so we can share your laughs. Published authors will receive a \$75 honorarium.