



# The Doctor Is In

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## The Happy Feet

**NEW YORK, NY July 7 (PinoyGlobal)** - Being a doctor as a profession, we are trained not to be scared of blood, not to feel nauseous when looking at somebody's mouth and nose and not to feel dizzy to look at somebody's brain coming out of the skull or somebody's intestines coming out of the belly. But after 20-years as a doctor, one thing I never got used to is to deal with somebody's feet. I am glad I am not a podiatrist.

Working in the Emergency Room (ER) seeing 20-30 patients a day I have to examine their feet because its part of the complete medical examination. Some foot are easy and some are not. Some are stinky at one foot away and some are smelly one room away. Just use your imagination. There is a rule at the ER never remove somebody's shoes not unless it is absolutely necessary. But I have to break that rule to avoid missing a pulse less leg. And be sued for a million dollars for not checking somebody's foot. So whether I like it or not I have to examine the foot.

The homeless people usually come to the ER everyday complaining of foot pain. Most of their feet are swollen, dirty and with chronic ulcers. Some have their socks and shoes part of their body already and one has not removed his socks and shoes in two years. He sleeps with them on. When I removed his shoes and socks I felt nauseated just like everybody else.

His socks were matted to his skin and they shredded the skin and I had to remove each strands of fibers from his skin. His shoes are too heavy with all the grease, mud and dirt. When I put them in the garbage bag they felt so heavy like a newborn baby. I had to ask permission from the patient if I could throw his shoes away.

Last night I had a young homeless guy who was examined by a young resident. I knew him because he comes

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to ER every day. He is a poor historian and he speaks with his hands signaling his words and stutters. He shows his swollen feet and demanded immediate treatment. Immediately, the resident wanted to make a complete work up – X rays and studies to look for blood clots in the leg. I told her this person comes to the ER more than I do and I see him more than I see my wife. I told her he has been worked up a million times already. All he needs a bed and a warm breakfast in the morning. The reason his feet is swollen is because he sleeps at nights sitting and he never raises his leg up.

Another patient of mine is a elderly man in his 80s. When I saw his foot nobody was cutting his nails and they were curling like a cinnamon bread that makes a complete circle. Because of the fungus his nails are so thick and ugly looking. If only I had the time I felt cutting his nails. But I don't get paid doing those procedures.

Then we have people with diabetes. Because of poor circulation, their feet develop ulcers and when bacteria like pseudomonas E/coli colonize the foot. It gets a mushy odor. Sometimes when their foot becomes necrotic smells like a dead rat.

I miss being a doctor in the Philippines because I don't have to deal with foot problems like these. People are too poor and don't were shoes. Everybody wears a rubber flip flaps. Old people go to the farm bare footed. Their feet do not stinking but healthy except of course, for some cracks and calluses due to walking on uneven grounds. People step on glass and nails but because the skin of their feet are so thick they become impenetrable to small, sharp objects.

In conclusion, please, always wear a use a new pair of socks because you cannot be sure you will not be brought to the Emergency Room. Just as they say always wear new underwear. Frankly, it doesn't matter if the socks are of different colors as long as they are clean.