



Reply to the Letter to the Editor

Reply to the Letter to the Editor: Not the Last Word: Rethinking the Resident Research Requirement

Joseph Bernstein MD

To the Editor,

I want to thank Dr. Winet for his interest and comments regarding my column. I certainly endorse his aim to teach critical review and I agree with many aspects of his critique.

(RE: Bernstein J. Not the Last Word: Rethinking the Resident Research Requirement. *Clin Orthop Relat Res*. 2017;475:1948–1953).

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Still, I must quibble with his statement that medicine delivers a “truth” when there is successful treatment. Sadly, truth is neither necessary nor sufficient. We can have success without truth (witness, for example, the patients who survived their blood-letting); worse, we can have failure despite the truth.

Life, as the aphorism has it, is a sexually-transmitted condition that is inevitably fatal. That is to say,

ineluctably, medicine will, in the end, fail to deliver a “successful treatment.” But that does not make its work any less valid.

For me, the truth towards which medicine aims is the detection and selection of that which is least false. Robust training in the methods of research is apt help in that quest—via the new knowledge produced by those who dedicate themselves to find it, and via the enlightened skepticism of those called upon to employ it.