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|  | UNIVERSITA' DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA | SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY  MASTER DEGREE IN MEDICINE AND SURGERY A.A. 2021/2022  Case Based Learning and General Clinical Practice |

**UNIT 6- GROUP EXERCISE 1**

**The coffee**

**30 min**

**GROUP NAME………………………………………………………………………………………**

M.R. died in October at the age of 68. He was affected by colorectal cancer with liver metastasis causing an hepatic impairment, as a cirrhosis.

It was a very demanding and tiring house assistance from May to October.

Since mid - September I used to go to his house daily. The examination was difficult and used to last for nearly two hours (….) and I couldn’t leave his house before celebrating the coffee ritual. Despite being oppressed by sufferance and bad thoughts as a result of his illness, M.R. (….) loved polite manners. So my daily examination ended up drinking a steaming coffee (from the best coffee beans) served in a cup of exquisite porcelain with delicious pastries or biscuits, which a ramification of dear ones let him have from the diverse Italian regions. It was usually the moment in which his wife started talking with me and M.R. used to listen to us cheering up.

One afternoon of late September I got there and found M.R. deeply depressed. We went through a critical phase of deficiency which had made me perform, a few days before, a paracentesis.

It was getting better, but M.R. kept feeling exhausted and gloomy. Being meticulous, always tormented by feelings of fear and insecurities, M.R. had stopped drinking coffee since he fell ill.

I said brusquely:

-How come I can’t ever have the pleasure to drink the coffee with you?

- No, doctor, it may make me feel bad

- I can assure you just a bit of coffee doesn’t affect you

- You never know…have a coffee for me

I don’t know what happened but by instinct I said:

-You know what I will do? I’ll drink it and then I’ll explain it to you, so it will be as if we had drunk it together….and, like a competent ham actor, I found the inspiration for a short, excessive disquisition on that coffee. I don’t remember anything about what I said, but it produced some effect:

-Well, did you like this coffee?

-It was excellent, doctor- M.R. answered, and when I left a faint smile appeared on his face.

In the following days that shadow of his smile soon disappeared: there were more complications, then again paracentesis and the inevitable death.

The memory of that cachexic face with a flickering smile is still vivid in my memory, but it is a bitter one: for both of us it has been the illusion of a moment.

*(from a narrative of Beppe Montagna)*

***What striked/stood out to you while reading about this narrative?***

***In your opinion, in this narrative, are there relevant features of a good relationship?***

***In your opinion, were the actions of the doctor effective?***

***Share your reflection with your colleagues***

Parisi 2018