

*The International Journal of*

# WHOLE PERSON CARE

VOLUME 5 • NUMBER 1 • 2018 • 6-7

## PERSONAL NARRATIVE WRITING WORKSHOPS FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS AND PATIENTS WITH HIV: NARRATIVE MEDICINE IN THE POST- HAART ERA

**Ianthe Schepel<sup>1</sup>, Jonathan Chou<sup>2</sup>, Suad Kapetanovic<sup>2</sup>, Anne Vo<sup>2</sup>, Pamela Schaff<sup>2</sup>**

1 Corresponding author: University of Oxford, Oxford, Oxfordshire, United Kingdom  
[irmschepel@gmail.com](mailto:irmschepel@gmail.com)

2 Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California, United States of America

Since the advent of highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART) in the mid-1990's, HIV in the United States has become a chronic and largely controllable disease. Adherence to therapy is one of the most crucial aspects of HIV treatment and control due to the high risk of viral resistance. The main barriers to successful treatment are now psychosocial and structural, including social stigma and the high burden of disease in vulnerable communities. To improve clinical outcomes, physicians today must learn to engage with their patients on the level of their lived experiences, which include their social backgrounds and personal values and priorities. In 2016, supported by a Narrative Medicine Fellowship from Columbia University, we piloted a novel narrative medicine-based medical education intervention in which patients with HIV and medical students from the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California wrote and shared personal narratives with each other. Nine medical students and five patients participated in one of two five-week long workshop series. Patients were recruited from the Maternal, Child, and Adolescent/Adult Clinic at Los Angeles County General.

© 2018 Ianthe Schepel, Jonathan Chou, Suad Kapetanovic, Anne Vo, Pamela Schaff. This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons License [CC BY](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

*International Journal of Whole Person Care*  
Vol 5, No 1 (2018)

Mixed methods were used to evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of the intervention. This included the development of a grounded theory of participants' experiences of the workshop series. Participants articulated how the workshop series expanded their sense of agency, humanity, and empathy toward others, enabling them to explore new ideals for therapeutic physician-patient relationships. The results of the study, as well as the workshop series method and syllabus, will be presented. ■