

## Evelyn V. Hess

### Cincinnati Rheumatologist Blogs from 2011 ACR: What Is Education?

Tue, 11/08/2011 - 8:41am - Deb Fritz MD

When I completed my rheumatology fellowship at the University of Cincinnati, I told my mentor, [Dr. Evelyn Hess](#), that I was elated and relieved to have finally completed my medical education; now I could rest.

Dr. Hess quickly shot back (with an expression similar to the expression she wears in the image I've posted of her here) that I had only just begun my educational process and that I would be studying and learning for the rest of my life. I looked at her strangely, though I somehow knew she was right. The next day, I began my vacation in Hawaii.

After one month of rest, I hung out my shingle...I opened my private practice...and yes, my true education really began then. Not only did I have to start independently putting into practice the knowledge I had acquired over the years, as I was now seeing patients completely without supervision for the first time (an intimidating realization for any new doctor), but I was also learning the nuances of running a business and earning a living.

Twenty four years later, I continue to see patients and manage a private practice. The field of rheumatology has grown exponentially since I completed my formal education. But by staying connected to research and excellent rheumatologists at UC (where I have worked in the outpatient clinic since my fellowship), by reading journals, and by attending annual ACR meetings, I have expanded my knowledge base in synchrony with the growth in my field. All this education is actually delightful—it's as if each new thought and new discovery adds granules of sand atop an ever-expanding base...I picture it in my mind's eye as a giant sand pyramid. At this point in my career and in my education, because I've constructed a solid, wide base of knowledge in which to anchor new information, I can sit back at meetings and absorb the gestalt of a lecture rather than feverishly writing notes and facts as many of us do when we're learning something new.

The greater challenge to me these days is keeping abreast of the swiftly changing administrative aspect of running a medical practice—electronic health records, revised coding and documentation requirements, etc, are radically changing how physicians practice medicine and earn a living. Once again, a part of my education is only beginning. It keeps me sharp. I didn't realize, back then, how right Dr. Hess really was.



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