

# **My First Experience with Death**

G. Shamsi ( Fourth Year Medical Student, Baqai Medical University, Karachi. )

When you enter medical college as a first year student, a lot is said to you and among these is the saying that you can never forget the first death and birth you witness. Death is a grim reality, which lingers at the back of every medical student's mind, but losing your first patient is always hard.

My first experience with death came in January 2000. It was during my surgical elective in Aga Khan Hospital. One of our patients was shifted from the intensive care unit to the special care unit that night. She stayed pretty stable throughout the night. In the morning around 6 O'clock as we started to prepare for our early morning round, I checked her vitals and wrote her case summary. She was in a stable condition. We started our round from the general ward and proceeded towards the special care unit. I presented her case, the senior resident commented on how well she was progressing. As we moved to the second patient, something went terribly wrong. Suddenly the alarm went off and all rushed to her bed. Her pulse that was stable at 67 beats per minute a second ago had suddenly fallen to a 38. All the team members were at their toes, the life saving cart was there, so was the defibrillator, but all our efforts went in vain as after several attempts we failed to revive her. It was at the moment that I realized how real death was in our profession.

I was really taken aback and felt totally numb, it took me several minutes to pull myself together and join my team at the next bed. It is a part and parcel of medicine but it still takes time to adjust to some thing as real as this.