



Cancer Clinic Meme for New Radiation Oncology Residents Beginning Their Rotation

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September 29, 2014

1. The most common thing you will hear in the clinic is the sound of people laughing.
2. The second most common sound you will hear is computers.
3. You might think the carpet in front of the waiting room chairs would be worn down to a nub.
4. It isn't.
5. People staring at the carpet in the waiting room may make your heart clench.
6. Some people look victorious sitting in a wheelchair.
7. Some people look like they spent their whole life in a wheelchair.
8. Everybody you see sitting in a wheelchair in a cancer clinic needs to be sitting in a wheelchair.
9. Pain changes the shape of a body as much as weight loss.
10. Fear changes the contours of a face.
11. Sometimes a person's cheekbones can tell a lot about how she is feeling.
12. For some people it's the area under the eyes.
13. Sometimes you can look at a person's temples and tell if the cancer has spread.
14. A woman wearing lipstick can sometimes fool you, though.
15. Temporarily.
16. Nothing in a person's appearance predicts how she will respond when she hears bad news.
17. Almost no one screams or faints when you tell them the cancer has spread.
18. But it happens.
19. So people need to be seated when you give bad news.
20. Seated in a chair.
21. Not an exam table.
22. And definitely not supine.
23. Every person who ends up in your cancer clinic never planned to do so.
24. Virtually no one fails to make eye contact when talking to an oncologist.
25. A lot of it.
26. People tell stories of incredible complexity when they exhale.
27. So listen hard.
28. And look them right straight in the eyes the whole time.
29. And then go out every evening and walk.
30. Far.