

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

REFLECTION ON VOLUNTEERING IN ANESTHESIOLOGY AND INTENSIVE CARE: A YOUNG DOCTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

As a recent medical graduate, I had the opportunity to volunteer in the Department of Anesthesiology and Intensive Care at the University Clinic for Surgical Diseases “St. Naum Ohridski” in Skopje. Though brief, this experience has had a lasting impact on both my professional orientation and personal growth. It helped me discover the true essence of anesthesiology - an often underestimated, yet absolutely vital pillar of modern medicine.

At the time, I was uncertain about which specialty to pursue. The chance to join the anesthesia team as a volunteer gave me firsthand insight into a field that is intellectually rigorous, technically demanding and deeply rewarding. Despite its quiet presence, anesthesiology is essential across all stages of surgical care. From preoperative assessment and intraoperative physiological management to postoperative analgesia and critical care, anesthesiologist safeguards the patient's life throughout the entire perioperative course.

What particularly inspired me was the dual nature of the specialty. It requires both acute cognitive skills and precise hands-on interventions. The ability to manage airways, titrate complex drug regimens, respond to emergencies within seconds, and lead resuscitation and intensive care scenarios makes anesthesiology a discipline that combines mastery of knowledge with rapid life-saving action.

Medical school often presents anesthesia in a narrow context - focused mainly on induction and maintenance of anesthesia. However, during my volunteering period, I witnessed its much broader scope: the coordination between surgical and critical care teams, the responsibility for patient's stability during high-risk procedures, and the role in organ support and end-of-life decisions in the ICU. I came to see why anesthesiologists are often called the “silent protectors” in the operating theatre. Without their presence, no surgical intervention could proceed safely.

What I valued most was the mentorship I received. The medical team treated me as a colleague, shared their knowledge generously, and involved me in discussions and decision-making processes. Their support gave me confidence and a sense of belonging in the field I now feel deeply passionate about.

Today, I can honestly say: I didn't choose anesthesiology - anesthesiology chose me. It captured my attention not only as career, but as a calling. For other young doctors standing at a professional crossroads - I encourage them to look beyond the surface of this specialty. Its complexity, relevance and elegance, make it one of the most rewarding fields in modern medicine.

Sincerely,

Filipche Ana

MD, Faculty of Medicine

University “Ss Cyril and Methodius”

Republic of North Macedonia