

## *Code Blue Stories*

# Mistaken for a Veterinarian

### On an Airplane

I was traveling on a flight from Salt Lake City to Puerto Rico to present a paper on vaginal hysterectomy at an American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists meeting. Two hours after takeoff, just after everyone had finished lunch, a voice came over the speaker system asking if there was a doctor on the plane. Because I saw someone in front of me raise his hand, I kept silent. Seconds later, however, the same announcement was made, because the first doctor turned out to be a dentist. I told a nearby flight attendant that I was a medical doctor, an obstetrician.

Some 6 or 7 rows behind me was a diaphoretic, apprehensive man who had his hand on his chest. It appeared he had angina; his blood pressure was nor-

mal and his pulse was rapid but regular. I gave him oxygen, 2 sublingual nitroglycerin tablets, and 2 aspirins and asked the other passengers to make room for him to lie down.

After 10 to 15 minutes, he was feeling better and was very thankful. He suddenly asked me where I came from. I hesitated, because of the prejudice in the United States against my country of birth, but then I responded softly, "Well, I'm Iranian." Perhaps he didn't hear me correctly or misunderstood my accent, because he loudly declared, "Oh, God! I have a heart attack in the sky, and I'm saved by an animal doctor!"

—**Saeed Mahmoodian, MD, FACOG**  
*Fishersville, VA*

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