

*Poetry***They are people too (an Ob-Gyn intern's perspective)****Chikondi Chapuma**

Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital, Blantyre, Malawi

Correspondence: chikondichapuma@gmail.com

If I could get a kwacha every time
I met aNatchathu, aNabanda, aNasibeko or oNana and compassion flooded my heart.
If I could get just a kwacha every time aNatchatu
refused doctor's orders of, "no coitus" after her previous evacuation,
afraid her septic miscarriage would land oBanda into the warm embrace
of another woman while she cries in agony of another lost child.

If only a one kwacha coin could land on my lap every time
aNabanda refused to go for any type of contraception after her traumatic
episode of a molar pregnancy; she would hardly despair aNgozo's insistence
on having another child as soon as possible,
the incentive being that he will walk out through that door
should there be any delay.
I wish I could get one kwacha every time this puts a frown on my face.

Maybe I could afford to tell them, they are people too.
They are not gods. They are people too.
They are not slaves. They are people too.

If I could get one kwacha every time aNasibeko, a 40-year-old G7P6 at 39weeks,
walks into my labour ward with a BP of 70/50 and fetal parts palpable per abdomen, and I am sweating.
Or a coin for my worried face when I see aNana.
I swear this is the 10th time am writing a consultation to Room 6.
She claims she is pregnant but her pregnancy test is negative yet again.
I know it is because of you, akulu!

If all she could hear was, "No, baby, let us stop trying.
I love you, and I don't want lose you."
Maybe things would be different. Maybe aNasibeko's daughter,
a 15-year-old short primigravida would not be on this trolley going to theatre.

Please tell them they are people too.
