

# Hemorrhage

*An obstetric emergency anecdote and a patient's pun on "going into shock"*

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## ABSTRACT

This anecdotal piece recounts a scene in the emergency service of a maternity hospital. A full-term pregnant woman, arriving from a neighboring town with suspected placenta previa, presents with heavy bleeding, pallor, a thready pulse and signs of hypotension. Called to assess her together with interns, the resident confirms the clinical suspicion and urgently orders the nursing assistants to take the patient "upstairs," warning that she is "going into shock," a reference to hemorrhagic shock. Though gravely weakened, the patient reacts with humor and indignation, replying that she is "going into shock" because she is poor, since, were she rich, she would be "giving birth." The short story plays on the double meaning of language and on the social differences perceived in medical care.

**KEYWORDS:** *obstetrics; hemorrhage; placenta previa; shock; medical humor; social inequality*

At the Emergency Service of the maternity hospital, a full-term pregnant patient arrives from a neighboring town with suspected placenta previa, bleeding heavily, pale, with a thready pulse and already showing signs of hypotension. The resident is then called to assess the patient together with some interns. After a rapid clinical and obstetric evaluation, he confirms the clinical suspicion and urgently calls the nursing assistants, saying:

— Send the patient upstairs right now, she's going into shock!

The patient, though close to death, still finds the strength to raise her head, look at the doctor with wide, indignant eyes, and says:

— Yes, doctor, I'm "going into shock" because I'm poor; if I were rich, I'd be "giving birth"!

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