



# My Mother's Incidentaloma

Richard Bronson, MD

(Fam Med. 2019;51(4):360)

doi: 10.22454/FamMed.2019.701295

I scrawled a silly face on a latex glove blown up to distract you,  
smiled as we waited in a cramped exam room.

"You brought me here," your eyes accused, watching  
the heavy minutes tick by.

Your doctor retired, a new one had ordered "This test and that,"  
an ultrasound to confirm his suspicion of gall stones—  
and there in the right kidney, "A spot."

"No way to know if it's cancer. Best to remove it," he'd said.  
How to live with that on your mind! I suggested a second opinion.

The urologist, tall, distant, white coated as I at other times,  
told us your choices, the risks. We sat there in silence,  
thinking what could not be said.

"I'll never escape! What should I do?" You frowned at me.  
"Say something! You're a doctor!"

I thought of my father, who'd prided himself in his medical judgment—  
told his patients what to do. He'd have advised you, but I was not him.  
"Mom, a difficult choice, I can't decide for you," all I could muster  
seeking my own escape.

Neither of us spoke on the drive to your place.  
I turned the radio on, turned the radio off  
as one thought echoed through my mind.  
Could I advise surgery you might not survive?

Week after week I phoned. You said,  
"I've scheduled the pre-op tests." Always  
postponed, you'd made a decision  
to proceed with surgery...  
at some distant date.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Address correspondence to Dr Richard Bronson, Professor of Obstetrics & Gynecology, Stony Brook University Medical Center, HSC T9-080, Stony Brook, NY 11790-8091. 631-444-2731. Fax: 631-444-8954. Richard.Bronson@Stonybrookmedicine.edu.