

Medical Magic

A magician was performing at the annual meeting of the American Medical Association. He had only one trick, but it was a good one. He invited any physician to bring a patient to a chair at the front of the stage. Behind him was an electronic board that displayed the name of the patient's disease. He instructed the patient to cough into a handkerchief. The magician paused, "The disease is... bronchiectasis! The crowd gasped! How did he do it? The next patient sat down and coughed into the handkerchief. "The disease is... eosinophilic granulomatosis!" Again right... the crowd went wild! Now a physician sat down in the chair. He had a respiratory disease, but he was not going to give this charlatan the satisfaction of identifying it. The physician felt a cough coming on, but he held it in, holding, until he could hold no longer, and let out a thunderous... sneeze! The magician was disappointed but then perked up. "Wait -- Let me see that handkerchief... From the nasal secretions, I can determine what cough he had inside him, and from that... lymphangioleiomyomatosis!" The crowd was silent. The physician actually had a cold. The magician turned scarlet red and stormed off the stage. He could have avoided this embarrassment if he had only remembered that you can't judge a cough by its booger.

