

SELECTED FOR THE 2007 SCOTTSDALE CENTER FOR THE
PERFORMING ARTS EVENING OF NEW WORKS

The Checkup

A Short One-Act Comedy By Stafford Krause

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Mrs. Wilson: a doctor's patient

Dr. Charles: Mrs. Wilson's doctor

TIME AND PLACE

The present time in a doctor's examination room

The Checkup

(The CURTAIN RISES on the scene of a doctor's examining room. MRS. WILSON, a lady in her mid '50s, is sitting on an examining table with her legs dangling down. She looks towards the door as DR. CHARLES, in a white doctor's coat enters. HE is carrying a file folder.)

DOCTOR

Well, Mrs. Wilson ... And how are we today?

MRS. WILSON

We are ... I mean I am very well, thank you Doctor. Since I lost that 20 lbs. last year, started to take VironX for my arthritis and got my hot flash medicine in balance ... I just feel wonderful!

DOCTOR

I'm so glad to hear that.

(... checking Mrs. Wilson's file folder)

Well, then. Let's first check all the vital signs, shall we.

Let's see now:

Blood pressure, 118 over 62... that's good.

Pulse, 76 ... normal.

Ah! But just a little overweight.

MRS. WILSON

Overweight?

DOCTOR

(... pulling out a height to weight chart)

Yes, just a bit over on the height to weight chart.

MRS. WILSON

But I weigh exactly the same I did a year ago, after losing that 20 lbs.

DOCTOR

Well I guess that you haven't heard. They have revised the height/weight chart again based on the latest statistical data. I'm afraid that you are now overweight.

MRS. WILSON

That's not fair. I busted my butt to lose those 20 lbs. and now some number-crunchers change all the rules.

DOCTOR

Well it is just a wee bit worse than that Mrs. Wilson. It seems you have slipped into the "obese" category.

MRS. WILSON

(... horrified)

Obese?!

Let me see that stupid chart.

(...grabs the chart from the Doctor)

MRS. WILSON

(..studying the chart, then pointing at it)

Well it shows right here on this stupid chart ...

For 5 ft. 5 in. tall, my weight isn't in the "obese " category.

DOCTOR

(..looking at Mrs. Wilson's folder)

I'm afraid we all...

(... with a kindly smile)

...get a bit older. ... and I'm sure you've heard that we shrink a little as we age.

It seems that you are now 5 ft. 4 inches tall

You have shrunk into the "obese" category.

MRS. WILSON

(... looking panicked)

Obese! What will I do? What will I tell my friends?

DOCTOR

Now, Mrs. Wilson, please calm down:. You're just over the "obese" line.

MRS. WILSON

Easy for you to say "just over". I have to live with this

DOCTOR

Now, now. I'm sure we can work something out.

Let's go on with your review.

MRS. WILSON

(... dejectedly)

OK.

DOCTOR

Now I see Mrs. Wilson that you're taking VironX.

MRS. WILSON

Oh yes Doctor. It has done wonders for my arthritis and doesn't upset my stomach.

DOCTOR

Well to avoid stomach upset was one of the main reasons I prescribed VironX for you.

Unfortunately some new research studies have shown that VironX can cause blindness in certain patients.

MRS. WILSON

Oh my God. Blindness?!

DOCTOR

Well it hasn't been completely confirmed, and the blindness is thought to be temporary. But it can occur at any time. For example while you're breast feeding, skiing ... or driving a car... or...

MRS. WILSON

(... interrupting)

Well I certainly don't breast feed ... and I don't ski ... but I do drive ... and I certainly do not want to be blind.

What do I do Doctor?

DOCTOR

Well fortunately there are some substitute medications to treat arthritis that do not cause this sight condition.

MRS. WILSON

Oh, good!

DOCTOR

Yes I have a couple of samples right here that might work for you.

(pause)

Now Mrs. Wilson ... what do you prefer ... diarrhea or constipation?

MRS. WILSON

(... exclaiming)

Diarrhea or constipation?

DOCTOR

Unfortunately all medications have some side effects. Of the substitute medications I might recommend ... one has the side effect of diarrhea ... the other of constipation.

MRS. WILSON

(... disgusted)

Maybe I should just go blind!

DOCTOR

Now, Now Mrs. Wilson ... let's not get all upset again.
Let's try to make a mature decision.

MRS. WILSON

I just don't know. What would you suggest?

DOCTOR

Well you know this isn't a medical recommendation ... but I think I would probably select the one with the constipation effect.
The constipation advertisements on TV, with the sophisticated blonde lady in white suggesting that she "too sometimes suffers from constipation" seem more socially acceptable than the diarrhea ads.

MRS. WILSON

(... aside)

Oh great! Now TV is helping me choose what to put into my body.

DOCTOR

Well we can come back to that decision.
Now your menopausal treatment is a real dilemma.

MRS. WILSON

What? That too?

DOCTOR

I'm afraid that more and more research is linking menopausal hormone treatment to greater chances for cancer later on.

MRS. WILSON

Oh great! If I don't die tomorrow from a heart attack caused by my obesity... or go blind while driving and kill myself ... or probably shoot myself because of my diarrhea or constipation... my hot flashes will get me before too long.

(...dejected)

Oh great! That is just great!

(A cell phone rings)

(MRS. WILSON pauses to check her pocket and pulls out a cell phone)

MRS. WILSON

I'm sorry Doctor. That was my cell phone.

(SHE puts the cell phone to her ear)

I hope you don't mind my answering.

DOCTOR

Oh no. You go ahead.

But are you aware of the latest research that links cell phone usage to brain tumors?

MRS. WILSON

(... almost hysterical as she answers the phone)

Hello.

(pause)

How am I, Betty?

I'll tell you how I am!

(pause)

I sound awful?

(... louder)

I sound awful?

That's because I feel awful

(pause)

I ought to see a doctor? !

I ought to see a doctor?!

(... holding the phone at arm's length and screaming into the phone)

I AM SEEING A DOCTOR!

CURTAIN