



CENTER NOTES

"One of the essential qualities of the clinician is interest in humanity, for the secret of the care of the patient is in caring for the patient."

Francis W. Peabody

In the first issue of **Midwest Medical Ethics**, this column began with a series of ethical questions which included, "What is happening to the physician - patient relationship?" In this issue we are pleased to feature three unique perspectives on the physician-nurse-patient relationship.

Midwest Medical Ethics, like the Center itself, is growing and expanding. This is the first issue to include a "Letters to the Editor" column which will be a regular feature. One of our stated goals is to serve as an open forum where people can share differing points of view on these issues. We encourage you to participate.

You will notice another new column which lists corporate contributors, institutional members and founding members. We appreciate the support provided by these groups as well as that provided by our individual members. It is your support which allows us to provide for discussion about these issues in our community.

Bioethics literally translates to "life ethics," and we believe it is important that this publication provide pertinent information about real human issues. If there are topics or concerns that you would like to see addressed, please let us hear from you at:

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Kansas City, MO 64131
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Myra Christopher
Executive Director

Healing Attitudes

Norman Cousins

In his final piece for *The New England Journal of Medicine*, editor Franz Ingelfinger wrote: "If we assume that physicians do make patients feel better most of the time, it is chiefly because the physician can reassure the patient or give medication that is mildly palliative."

In a sense, every patient-physician relationship is a psychosocial venture. Attitudes are important in healing, although not an alternative to competent medical attention. Dr. Ralph J. DiClemente and Dr. Lydia Temoshok of the University of California at San Francisco presented to the 1985 meeting of the American Psychosomatic Society a study which showed that a patient's psychological adjustment to serious illness may be a significant predictor of disease outcome.

Just learning about the fact of severe illness can sometimes create feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, anxiety, and panic, with well-known physiological penalties. The wise physician recognizes the need to provide emotional support for the environment of treatment. The physician cannot guarantee that medical approaches will work, but what is of greatest concern to the patient is that everything possible be done. Medical science and psychological support go hand in hand. Most patients have a better attitude when they have a partnership with their physicians than when they feel sidelined and helpless.

A number of recent publications identify the wide range of research in the emerging field of psychoneuroimmunology. In his introduction to *Psychological and Behavioral Treatments for Disorders of the Heart and Blood Vessels, An Annotated Bibliography*, Dr. Neal Miller of the Rockefeller University writes:

"Today, according to recent studies in Canada and the United States, approximately 50 percent of mortality from the ten leading causes of death can be traced to behavioral factors, such as lifestyles. Other advances have more directly illuminated the connections between physical health and both psychological and behavioral factors. There has been increasing evidence from clinical and epidemiological studies, confirmed by rigorously controlled experiments, that psychological conditions that may be loosely described as 'stressful' can have adverse effects on the physical health of the body and that these effects can be *strongly modified by psychological variables* . . . Finally, increasingly powerful neuroanatomical, neurophysiological, and biochemical techniques are providing additional evidence concerning some of the mechanisms through which the highest centers of the brain can affect the health of the body."

The physician can help in the patient's recovery by paying attention to a patient's emotional needs

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Healing Attitudes

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and to the quality of life, helping the patient to mobilize inner resources when confronting a difficult challenge, relieving feelings of panic and helplessness, and being mindful of the needs of family and friends.

People are not machines. Neither are physicians mechanics. The interaction between patient and physician begins with confidence and respect - confidence by the patient in the physician, and respect by the physician for the imponderables that can represent a vital fraction in any equation of treatment and recovery.

Norman Cousins, former editor of *The Saturday Review*, is currently Adjunct Professor in the School of Medicine at UCLA. His new book, *Albert Schweitzer's Mission*, has just been published by W.W. Norton.

COMING EVENTS

August 24-28, 1986

"Ethics, The Law, and The Health Care Professions Conference", **Jackson, Wyoming**. For information, contact:
Conferences and Institutes
University of Wyoming
P.O. Box 3972, University Station
Laramie, Wyoming 82071
(307) 766-2124

TV SPECIAL

"Managing Our Miracles: Health Care in America"
PBS Tuesdays 9 P.M. C.D.T., beginning
September 30, 1986.
Ten-part series dealing with the ethical, legal, and social questions raised by modern medicine

October 2-4, 1986

"Application of Ethical Principles to Nursing Practice", First Annual Nursing Conference on Ethical Issues.
Washington, D.C.
For information, contact:
Lois C. Crooks, R.N., M.A.
George Washington University
Hospital
Department of Nursing
901 23rd St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037
(202) 676-8281

October 21-22, 1986

"Medicine and Religion Symposium"
Kansas City, Kansas.
For information, contact:
Office of Continuing Education
University of Kansas Medical Center
39th and Rainbow
Kansas City, KS 66103
(913) 588-4488

November 6, 1986

"Medical Ethics for the Practitioner"
Kansas City, Missouri.
Part of the Southwest Clinical Society's Annual Fall Clinical Conference, November 6-8. For information, contact:
Southwest Clinical Society
2220 Holmes Street
Room 230-232
Kansas City, MO 64108
(816) 471-3876

Spring, 1987

"Issues in Medical Ethics"
Kansas City, Missouri.
For information, contact:
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