

Peer Review

Review of: "Humanity in a World Without Empathy: Medical Professionals and a Holistic View of the Human Being"

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The manuscript addresses a highly relevant issue in contemporary medicine: the necessity of maintaining a holistic approach in patient care within an increasingly secularized and transcultural context. The figure of Hanna Chrzanowska is effectively used as a case study to illustrate the possibility of integrating professionalism, empathy, and respect for the human dimension of illness. The text is well-written, clear, and well-argued, addressing crucial aspects of modern medical practice.

Strengths of the Manuscript

- 1. Relevance of the Topic:** The manuscript tackles a timely and pressing issue—the increasing marginalization of the human dimension in medicine. The topic of humanizing healthcare is particularly pertinent in light of current healthcare and societal challenges.
- 2. Use of a Significant Historical Model:** The choice of Hanna Chrzanowska as an example is effective, as her professional experience and holistic approach are well documented. The manuscript successfully demonstrates continuity between past and present, suggesting that her principles remain applicable today.
- 3. Clarity of Argumentation:** The manuscript is logically and coherently structured. The transition from the general problem (the dehumanization of medicine) to the proposed solution (the recovery of a holistic approach) is well articulated.
- 4. Reflection on Contemporary Challenges:** The manuscript acknowledges the difficulties posed by secularization and transculturality, emphasizing the importance of adapting healthcare to a pluralistic society. This is a significant strength, as it demonstrates the author's awareness of the complexity of the issue.

Areas for Improvement

Despite these strengths, certain limitations should be addressed to enhance the quality of the manuscript:

1. **Lack of Empirical Evidence and Bibliographic References:** The manuscript does not provide empirical data or references to recent studies supporting its claims. For example, it asserts that modern medicine tends to neglect a holistic approach, yet no studies or statistics are cited to substantiate this claim. Similarly, the importance of cultural competence and narrative medicine is mentioned without reference to relevant research or international guidelines.
 - *Recommendation:* Integrate references to international studies on narrative medicine, transcultural healthcare, and spirituality in medical practice to strengthen the arguments presented.
2. **Need for Further Exploration of Narrative Medicine:** Narrative medicine is mentioned but not developed in depth. A more detailed explanation of how narrative medicine can be applied in clinical practice would be beneficial.
 - *Recommendation:* Expand this section by discussing concrete examples of the application of narrative medicine and its impact on the doctor-patient relationship, citing appropriate references.
3. **Clearer Distinction Between Empathy and Spirituality in Patient Care:** The manuscript presents spirituality as a fundamental dimension of care but does not clearly differentiate between empathy and spiritual support. In a multicultural context, empathy is essential, while spiritual support may not always be appropriate or requested by all patients.
 - *Recommendation:* Clarify the distinction between empathy and spirituality, providing relevant citations and demonstrating how empathy is a universal element of care, whereas spiritual support may be tailored to individual patient needs. Additionally, consider citing existing models of integrating spirituality into healthcare in an unbiased manner.
4. **Greater Consideration of the Secular Perspective in Medicine:** The manuscript heavily emphasizes the value of spirituality in care but does not account for alternative approaches for patients who do not ascribe spiritual meaning to their illness experience.
 - *Recommendation:* Include a discussion on how a holistic approach can be ensured for secular patients, for example, through psychological support or other forms of personalized care, with appropriate references.

Conclusion

Overall, the manuscript presents a strong and well-structured argument on the importance of a holistic approach in contemporary medicine. The selection of Hanna Chrzanowska as a model for humanizing care is particularly effective, grounding the discussion in historical context.

However, to enhance the academic quality of the text, it would be beneficial to:

1. Add references to empirical studies supporting the claims made.
2. Provide a more in-depth exploration of narrative medicine and its practical role.
3. Clearly distinguish between empathy and spirituality in patient care.
4. Consider the perspective of secular patients to ensure an inclusive approach.

By addressing these aspects, the manuscript could become more robust and persuasive, making a significant contribution to the debate on the dehumanization of medicine and the importance of person-centered care.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.