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Ethics

Lecture

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Ethics: Values and emotions in the field of motor disabilities

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We share emotions with others, and some of these emotions make us sensitive to the values that are important for us than for others. It's through our emotions that we become aware of our values. We have values in common because we have emotions in common. If we did not feel emotions ever, we wouldn't know what our values are. That's the reason why philosophers and physicians can dialogue together. Emotions such as respect, compassion, fear or indignation are sensitive experiences, which inform doctors about the value of the ethical

principles (autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, justice). However, we can't fully trust an emotion because although it reveals a value, it does not provide direct knowledge. We have no other access to our values than emotions, but, unfortunately, this knowledge is imperfect. This is why we need emotions to correct each other. Thus, a decision is justified, ethically speaking, when it is the result of an emotional review. Emotional revision is a spiritual exercise in which we play one emotion against another. It is a kind of "democracy of the emotions." Imagination, memory, reasoning and dialogue can allow us to experience new emotions and avoid making a decision dictated by a single emotion.

Further reading

Le Coz P, Tassy S, The philosophical moment of the medical decision: revisiting emotions felt, to improve ethics of future decisions, *J Med Ethics*. 2007;33(8):470–2.

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