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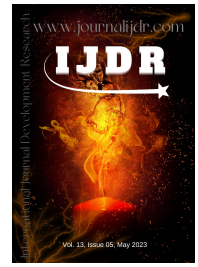
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CLARITY AS AGAINST CERTAINTY IN MEDICINE

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ABSTRACT

Clarity is felt deep within one's being or consciousness. Certainty is felt based on facts and is perceived by the mind. Clarity is subjectively felt whereas certainty is more objective and based on reasoning. Clarity connected with the limitless wisdom of 'pure consciousness' of 'inner self', provides the base for certainty to be built upon, while certainty pertains to and is limited by the logic of the mind. In recent times, the tendency to seek objective certainty in everything, is largely driving advances in medicine. Making distinctions on ever narrower grounds has become a logical compulsion, contributing to the increasing complexity of modern medicine. There needs to be a simple way that embraces complexity arising from objectivity. Clarity, by allowing a heuristic approach, provides the simple basis to embrace complexity and be at ease with uncertainty. Being focused on clarity of consciousness leads to a practice of medicine that is simpler, creative and more satisfying.

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INTRODUCTION

Clarity and Certainty, though synonyms, are not exactly the same. While understanding phenomena, and especially during the practice of medicine, both clarity and certainty play crucial roles. Though clarity and certainty are intertwined, there is a subtle difference between the two and in the way they impact the course of events.

Origin of Clarity and Certainty: Clarity implies something that is clear, while certainty implies something that is backed by evidence. Though clarity and certainty are felt by the human being, both these perceptions have different origins. Clarity is felt deep within one's being or consciousness, arises from being connected with the 'pure consciousness' of one's 'inner self' and can be cultivated through meditation (Sharma, 2015). Certainty is felt based on facts and is perceived by the mind. Clarity is subjectively felt, revealing and satisfying, while certainty is more objective and based on reasoning.

The apparently limitless wisdom of 'pure consciousness': The 'pure consciousness' of 'inner self' is reached by every individual in the deep sleep state (although subconsciously) and is felt as blissful clarity on reaching the waking state. Conversely, the individual experiencing clarity can be presumed to be connected with the limitless wisdom of 'pure consciousness' of 'inner self'. It has been shown that the subconscious 'inner self' is the base for SQ or 'spiritual intelligence', from which EQ or 'emotional intelligence' and IQ or 'cognitive intelligence' arise in the waking state (Padmanabhan, 2021).

Eclipsing of Clarity: While objective certainty can contribute to subjective clarity, certainty pertains to and is limited by the logic of the mind. Clarity is beyond the mind, pertaining to consciousness. However, seeking a sense of mooring, the mind is attracted towards certainty of logic in whatever that is perceived; subjective clarity sounds inadequate and may be considered as lacking in scientific rigor. The eclipsing of clarity by the certainty of logic has deep implications (Kamaraj, 2021), that apply also for the practice of medicine.

Impact on practice of medicine: Medicine has progressed and worked wonders by focusing on the clarity of concepts rather than on certainty of facts. Measuring blood pressure with the mercury manometer and the BP cuff is a rough estimate, but still has been widely and successfully used because of the conceptual clarity it has provided. Innumerable drugs, which are plant derivatives, have been discovered instinctively and used for hundreds of years based on clarity regarding their gross action. However, further advances like elucidation of their molecular structure and mechanism of action have served to fine-tune their usefulness (Ciddi Veeresham, 2012). In recent times, with the exception of narrative medicine (Kim Krisberg, 2017), the tendency to seek objective certainty has been largely driving advances in medicine. The reductionist approach of making distinctions on ever-narrower grounds has become a logical and fascinating compulsion, contributing to the increasing complexity of modern medicine (Paul, 2001). Because of the predilection for objectivity, the simple and subtle truths perceived by the clinician have come to be ignored on the grounds of being subjective. While it is widely acknowledged that medicine is a science as well as an art,

the objectivity of the science invariably pushes behind the subjectivity of the art (Hamish, 2000).

The need for a simple approach in patient care: The increasing complexity in medicine has strained patient care, which basically needs to consider the patient as a whole and not as a sum of parts. There needs to be an acceptable method that embraces the complexity arising from objectivity and yet provide a simple basis to provide wholesome care. Recently, the concept of 'complex adaptive systems' (Joachim, 2009) that seeks to accommodate unknown factors and changing clinical circumstances, has emerged in the quest towards this goal. In this regard, clarity perceived within the physician, can be considered to be a 'complex adaptive system', that has the potential to provide a simple basis for taking optimal decisions in complex situations.

Clarity allows heuristic approach: In other words, by prioritizing clarity over certainty, we have the heuristic approach (How heuristic thinking helps in reasoning logically, 2020), the common-sense approach that is widely used. Spiritual intelligence is at work when common sense is instinctively used along with clarity. The heuristic approach is at ease with uncertainty and is better suited than an algorithmic approach under changing clinical conditions. It considers the objective and the subjective perceptions without bias and facilitates good-enough decisions to be made within a limited time frame.

CONCLUSION

There is need to become aware of the profound value of clarity in the field of medicine. Objective certainty may help development of clarity but it may be prudent if it is not sought in everything. Routinely seeking and applying certainty within medicine expands objective knowledge and increases the complexity of medicine.

Clarity, being connected with the limitless wisdom of 'inner self' allows a simple heuristic approach for taking decisions in complex situations. Being focused on clarity of consciousness leads to a practice of medicine that is simpler, creative and more satisfying.

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