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## Editorial

# Medical Humanities as an approach towards Health

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## ABSTRACT

### Medical Humanities as an Approach towards Health

In recent years, the medical-pedagogical debate has been enriched with important contributions and literature, partly aimed at identifying a common and shared definition and name for the Medical Humanities, while also working to establish minimum ‘humanistic’ skills. Part of the recent discussion also focuses on the goal that trainers attempt to achieve through the design of an innovative educational approach and pathway that also involves the acquisition of transversal skills.

**Keywords:** Medical Education - Educational Standards - Medical Humanities

This Issue represents an opportunity to highlight the role of Medical Humanities in the field of medical education, in order to promote their presence and development within the medical curricula and popularise pertinent goals to health professionals as well as a non-specialist and wider audience. Moreover, it is important to define a clear role that each discipline or cultural field intends to play in a possible – and hopefully successful – redefinition of the humanistic skills required by doctors.

The purpose of Medical Humanities today appears to be that of accompanying, through inter and transdisciplinary training courses, the education and training of the doctor with cogent tools aimed at broadly defining the identity of health professionals, their role in education within the field of prevention and protection of individual and public health, their social responsibility as well as therapy and treatment. A critical look at medicine and society from a historical-socio-anthropological perspective can also be useful in order to involve the public in health education. Consequently, we can present medicine as one of the possible answers to socio-economic inequalities (and their application and importance in terms of access to health), and finally contextualize the biological data, in continuous transformation, in a socio-cultural framework.

In line with what is happening in Europe, it is necessary to provide medical training with the critical tools in order to understand the broader socio-cultural dimension of medicine, creating a framework to place today's excessively specialised approach to education and training within a conceptually unitary framework. Official Italian and international documents of the medical profession have long invoked an evolution of medicine aimed at facing the burdensome yet inescapable task of reconciling biomolecular progress and technological development, while also once again respecting a vision of care, the caretaker and those who are cared for. Consequently, it is fundamental that this vision be oriented towards complexity, a true methodological approach, as well as the joint development of thinking skills pertaining to global and general sensitivity.

Medical Humanities can help students focus on which cultural tools are actually useful to future doctors, called upon to face important challenges. We are now experiencing an increase in health and healthcare inequalities, as well as inequalities in relation to gender along with the global epidemic of chronic diseases. This runs parallel with a complexity of their management in a context of growing socio-economic hardship, together with cultural, socio-demographic changes related to the aging of the population, migration, immigration and climate change. All of the aforesaid are components that lead to a need for a structural rethinking of the clinical application of health equity. These premises give rise to the urgency of encouraging and increasing, in the training of doctors and health professionals, an interdisciplinary and multidimensional approach. The approach taken in this paper with respect to the promotion of an improvement of the training course therefore appears pertinent and necessary. Importantly, this work provides for the construction of developmental experiences

and the dissemination of advanced knowledge from multi- and transdisciplinary fields. The true goal is that of reaching increasingly higher educational standards – while constantly monitoring learning processes that have concrete repercussions in guaranteeing high intellectual, professional and ethical levels of healthcare services – consequently creating more solid foundations for the medical community as well as patients.

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