



ORAL PRESENTATION

Medicine and humanities in the era of electronic information exchange

Anna Batistatou

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Medical humanities is a multidisciplinary field, consisting of humanities, social sciences and arts, integrated in the curriculum of Medical undergraduate and graduate schools, as well as in residency programs and continuing medical education. All sciences included in Medical Humanities contribute to the high quality education of doctors and practice of medicine, and they are more important today, where medical practice is dominated by evidenced-based-medicine. The digital age, provides a unique opportunity for facilitating exposure and participation of all doctors to medical humanities. Digital media offer connection and interaction between scientists, and exchange of ideas in a large scale. Online publications are offering a unique opportunity for fast and widely distributed communication of information. Due to current technology the conversion of image to pixels is now possible. Digitalizing the glass slide enables independency from it. Pathologists create, view, analyze and manage digital slides. Telepathology diagnostic networks have aided pathologists worldwide. These advantages are leading to the globalization of pathology teaching and practice. However, it is well-established that human factors issues are critical for such telemedicine systems, and medical humanities can shape these factors. A good example of the application of humanities in pathology in the digital era is the study of human factors that affect proficiency of

pathologists as light microscopists. Cognitive psychology, using eye position tracking devices has shown that mentor and trainee viewing activities are not identical – eye movements reflect levels of surgical pathology expertise. Thus, cognitive factors that contribute to the gaining of expertise in diagnostic pathology can now be assessed.

In conclusion, medical humanities induce the development of observational skills and analytical reasoning; provide insight into human conditions, illness and suffering, perception of oneself, as well as into professionalism and responsibilities to self and others. The exchange of electronic information can greatly facilitate exposure to the disciplines and materials of medical humanities and provides active participation of all doctors in this novel field, the goal being personal and scientific enrichment.

Author details

Department of Pathology, University of Ioannina, Medical School, Ioannina, Greece

Email: abatista@cc.uoi.gr

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