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Today's medical self and the other: challenges and evolving solutions for enhanced humanization and quality of care

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In our time, with scientific developments continuously increasing the range of available treatment options, together with growing multiculturalism and social diversity, there is a need to find an effective compromise between science, technology, and humanism in the approach to health care. Within this context, two major models have become dominant in recent years as frameworks for the practice of medicine: evidence-based medicine (EBM) and values-based medicine (VBM). While the former lays emphasis on systematic research aided by technological advancement as the basis for clinical decision making, the latter focuses on linking scientific evidence to the particular and sometimes conflicting values operating both on the side of patients and clinicians during treatment. In this work we present the findings arising from a meticulous examination, using hermeneutic analysis, of sample interviews before and after an educational intervention in the form of a voluntary online course in clinical ethics carried out in a broad array of public sector hospitals in Mexico (16-19). This systematized enquiry reveals the grid of values already at work in active clinicians in their relationships with patients, and how values-awareness goes hand-in-hand with a heightened humanization of the patient experience in conditions of illness, pain, suffering, and death (IPSD). This in-depth analysis of empirical material will broaden our understanding of the conceptual and practical issues of day-to-day healthcare, as well of the key contact points of the EBM-VBM binomial, thus contributing to its solidification. Having identified and conceptualized them individually and as part of a network, we aim to ascertain all those in which EBM and VBM intersect, as well as the characteristics of an ideal clinician-patient relationship that guarantees medical excellence, both from a scientific and a humane perspective.

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