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*Philosophy of Medicine*  
*Философия на медицината*

## **NATIONAL CONFERENCE WITH INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION “PHILOSOPHY OF MEDICINE: APPROACHES AND PERSPECTIVES”, MARCH 26 – 27, 2024, BULGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES**

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The National Conference with International Participation “Philosophy of Medicine: Approaches and Perspectives” took place on March 26 and 27, 2024, in the “Prof. Marin Drinov” Hall at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS). The event was organized by the Philosophy and Sociology of Medicine Research Group at the Philosophy of Science Department, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, BAS (IPS – BAS), as part of a project “Contemporary Problems and Discussions in Philosophy and Sociology of Medicine” (2021 – 2024). Co-organizers of the event were the Faculty of Philosophy at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” (SU), the Faculty of Philosophy at the South-West University “Neofit Rilski” (SWU), the Medical University of Sofia (MU – Sofia), the Medical University of Varna (MU – Varna), the Medical University of Plovdiv (MU – Plovdiv), the Faculty of Medicine at Trakia University of Stara Zagora, and the Bulgarian Association of Philosophy of Medicine (BAPM). This was the first conference in the area of philosophy of medicine in Bulgaria which aim was to unite researchers from the fields of medicine, social sciences, and humanities providing a hybrid forum (both on-site and online) for interdisciplinary academic dialogue on various topics, such as the role and significance of the so-called “evidence-based medicine”, patient-oriented medicine, doctor-patient relationships in medicine, the role of technologies and science in contemporary medicine, the place of innovations and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in medicine, etc. The conference brought together participants from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Canada, China, Greece, Germany, Finland, Japan, Spain, the United States of America, and more. Invited speakers were Acad. Prof. Damian Damyanov, DMSc (BAS), Prof. Dr. Diego Lucci (American University in Bulgaria), Prof. Dr. Florian Steger (Institute of the History, Philosophy, and Ethics of Medicine at Ulm University, Germany), and Prof. Matthieu J. Guitton (Faculty of Medicine and Graduate School of International Studies at Université Laval, Quebec City, Canada).

The conference was opened with welcoming words from the organizers. The first paper was presented by Acad. Prof. Damyan Damyanov, entitled “The Philosophy of Medicine through the Eyes of a Clinician”. Acad. Damyanov is a professor of surgery and a doctor of medical sciences. In his paper, he considered the development and fragmentation of surgery in Bulgaria during the 20th century. Against this background, some topics from the area of philosophy and sociology of medicine, such as evidence-based medicine and healthcare, for example, were regarded from a clinician’s point of view. He also put the question of some modern innovations and technological advancements in medicine both in Bulgaria and around the world, including endoscopic and robotic surgery, interventional endovascular procedures, and the increasing tendency of integration of AI in the field of medicine. The topic of AI in medicine was further presented by Corresponding member Prof. Stefan Kostianev in his paper “Philosophy of Medicine in the 21st Century (FM21) – Between the Hammer and the Anvil of Technology and Ethics”. Prof. Lilia Gurova gave a talk on “The AI Challenge to Medicine” with a focus on the risks of using AI in medical diagnostics and health consulting, referring to the so-called “black box” problems. Dr. Ivan Kolev continued the discussion about AI highlighting the ethical challenges before its application in medicine. Prof. Matthieu Guitton considered the interactions between humans and computers in his presentation “AI, Artificial Humans, and Medicine”. Currently, the topic of AI is gaining more and more attention in the field of medicine due to the increasing use of intelligent technologies in diagnostics and healthcare management. It was also regarded in the presented papers by Dr. Nikola Pirovski (Trakia University), Assist. Prof. Iva Georgieva (IPS – BAS), Carlos Alberto Rosas-Jiménez (McMaster University).

Also, many participants took a position on the doctor-patient relationship which is a central topic in the philosophy and sociology of medicine. Assoc. Prof. Dimitar Mirchev (MU – Plovdiv) talked about the “Moral Dimensions of the Doctor-Patient Relationship”. Assist. Hristina Georgieva (Military Medical Academy, Sofia) discussed fragmented care in medicine and its negative impact on patients in her presentation “Fragmented Medicine with a Focus on Ethical and Social Implications.”. Prof. Bozhidar Ivkov (IPS – BAS; BAPM), who is a distinguished Bulgarian researcher in the sociology of disability, health sociology, and medical sociology, emphasized the importance of narrative medicine in building doctor-patient relationships in his talk “Careful Reading as the Main Method in Narrative Medicine Exemplified by Y. Yovkov’s Story ‘On the Wire’” The necessity of understanding the emotional and physical needs of patients with hearing loss in particular was regarded by Assist. Prof. Anna Andreeva (SWU) in a co-authored paper with Assist. Prof. Maria Stoykova, Assist. Prof. Radostina Kostova, Assist. Prof. Tsvetomira Braynova, and Assist. Prof. Angela Zelnichka “Patient-Centered Approach to Hearing Health Care”. Assist. Albena Cholakidou (Medical College – Pleven)

presented a sociological research on the level of trust that patients have in doctors and pharmacists, sharing results from an anonymous survey conducted among residents of Pleven in her study "Trust in Doctor-Patient-Pharmacist Relationships." Ashley Labodda (PhD candidate at University of Rochester, New York) considered the doctor-patient-family relationship in her presentation "The Process Prior to the Signature: Informed Consent and Models of Medical Decision Making".

The conference provided a platform for presenting ideas on the history of the philosophy of medicine. Prof. Florian Steger (Ulm University), Assoc. Prof. Nevena Panova (SU), Assoc. Prof. Irena Stankova (MU – Sofia), Anastasia Delcheva (MU-Sofia), and Mina Petrova (MU – Sofia) participated with papers referring to problems within the area of the philosophy of medicine in Antiquity. Assoc. Prof. Nevena Panova joined the discussion on the doctor-patient relationship in a historical context, giving a talk on "The Communication between Doctors and Patients as a Philosophical Problem in Classical Greece". Prof. Florian Steger offered a close reading of Galen's *Optimus Medicus* with a view to its relevance to present-day medical practice in his paper entitled "The Best Doctor is Also a Philosopher: Galen's Optimus Medicus". Assoc. Prof. Irena Stankova (MU-Sofia) explained the separation of rational medicine from philosophy as an independent science in Ancient Greece (V – IV Centuries BC). Anastasia Delcheva (MU – Sofia) presented a paper "The Doctor, the Philosopher, and the Charlatan in Lucian's Dialogue 'Philopseudes'", analyzing their characters, while Mina Petrova (MU – Sofia) analyzed the characters of the melancholic and the intellectual in Antiquity in her presentation "Insomniac Scholars and Melancholic Patients". Prof. Dr. Diego Lucci (AUGB) gave a talk on the interpretation of faith and madness in John Locke.

In addition to the aforementioned presentations discussing topics related to technologies in medicine, AI, and doctor-patient relationships, a set of key concepts in the philosophy of medicine such as disease, pain, diagnosis, prognosis, and health were considered and discussed in the papers of scientists as Assoc. Prof. Silviya Kristeva (SWU), Prof. Alexander Gungov (SU), Assoc. Prof. Julia Vasseva-Dikova (IPS, BAS), Assist. Prof. Nevena Krumova (SWU), Dr. Yafeng Wang (Institute of Philosophy, Chinese Academy of Sciences), Assist. Prof. Pablo Garcia-Barranquero (University of Malaga), Dr. Daniel Novotny (University of South Bohemia), Dr. Kyriaki Grammenou (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens), Dr. Denitsa Nencheva (Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum – BAS), and others. Assist. Prof. Nevena Krumova presented "Mythologizing and Demythologizing of Disease, Death and Life as a Problem of Contemporary Science". The topic of pain was studied by Yoshiyuki Hayashi (Saitama Medical University), who analyzed the concept of unconscious pain based on contemporary theories of consciousness and perception in his presentation "Unconscious Pain: A Tentative Framework for Discussion", while "Philosophy and Physical Pain in Modernity" by Dr. Kyriaki Grammenou analyzed the concept of physical pain in

modernity through literature. Referring to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Daniel Novotny focused on some neglected issues concerning epidemics of infectious diseases. Assist. Prof. Federico Burdman (Alberto Hurtado University) offered an interpretation of the relationship between addiction and disease in his talk “On the Grounds for Calling Addiction a Disease”. The phenomenon of aging was regarded by Assist. Prof. Pablo Garcia-Barranquero in a co-authored paper with Ana Soriano-Arroquia, and Marta Bertolaso “Onto-Epistemology of the Hallmarks of Aging”, and Dr. Denitsa Nencheva in her paper “The Geriatric Patient under the Frame of Modern Medical Methodologism: Expert Discourses, Practical Applications, and Philosophical Implications”. Assoc. Prof. Silviya Kristeva considered the technique of reaching a diagnosis in her talk “Fuzzy Domains Systems in the Operationalization of Medical Diagnosis”.

The conference also brought to the audience’s attention studies of significant public relevance. Assoc. Prof. Rosen Kalpachki (SWU, University Hospital “St. Anna”) emphasized the persistent necessity for public awareness regarding certain diseases (stroke, in particular) in his presentation “When Medical Awareness in Society Saves Lives – Stroke.” Assoc. Prof. Mariela Filipova (SWU) talked about “venous thrombolysis” in the treatment of ischemic stroke in her talk “Venous Thrombolysis in Medical Practice”. Prof. Dobroslav Kyurkchiev, MD, DSCI, (MU – Sofia) presented the debate between some clinical specialists and immunologists regarding the necessity of immunological tests in a paper “The ‘Expensive’ Immunological Tests Like Philosophy of Prediction or Philosophy of Greed”. The conference concluded with a presentation by the PhD student Yana Fileva (SWU) on the importance of the sociological interpretation of scoliosis, titled “Sociological Framework of Scoliosis”.

The National Conference with International Participation “Philosophy of Medicine: Approaches and Perspectives” (2024) successfully concluded. It made possible an interdisciplinary dialogue, providing an opportunity for scholars and researchers from various scientific fields from Bulgaria and around the world to exchange ideas. Thus, the conference significantly contributed to the discourse on the philosophy of medicine, establishing conditions for future scholarly collaborations in this important field.

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