

EPISTEMIC STATUS OF QUESTIONS IN MEDICAL PRACTICE

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Often times, medical practitioner asks questions to their patients before they begin their diagnoses. This paper is a philosophical examination of the nature of questions and its appropriateness in medical practice. It tries to look at the extent the doctor is justified in believing that the answers to the questions he ask are relevant to determine the medical cure of his or her patient. Again, the paper posits that there is dialectical relationship between the medical practitioner's questions and the patient's cognitive ability and articulation of his experience to the understanding of the medical practitioner for curative purposes. This paper introduces a new approach to medical questioning. This is because there are many ways of understanding medical questions as intimate, personal, clue, information giving and sometimes insulting. Medical questions should be philosophically redefined as rational questions whose answers are meant to inform honest assessment although open-closed for further questioning, possibly constrained by empirical requiring noetic resources to be answered. The stand of this paper is that the belief in questions has a high degree of positive epistemic status in medical practices when compared with other disciplines. This makes questions in medical practices value-laden and goal oriented. Thus, this paper argues that there is need to assess the epistemic value of asking relevant questions for curative purposes as it is proportionate to the cognitive, communication and expressive ability of the patients for further medical actions. Our methodology is critical and hermetical analysis which is further lazed on the theoretical framework of intersubjectivity. This is because the questions need answers for further actions and the questions are as important as the answers. The paper concludes with a discussion of some of the consequences of the conception of medical questions when misunderstood by the patient especially when the medical practitioner uses the answers to conceptualize diagnoses.

Keywords: Questions, Answers, Diagnoses, positive Epistemic Status, Belief, Medical