

CLINICAL ETHICS GRAND ROUNDS
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA & STOLLERY CHILDREN'S HOSPITALS,
MAZANKOWSKI ALBERTA HEART INSTITUTE and KAYE EDMONTON
CLINIC - CLINICAL ETHICS COMMITTEE

2015/2016 HUMANITY IN HEALTHCARE SERIES

This four-part series will examine the relationship between the personhood of clinicians and the organizations they serve. By exploring four specific themes, I hope to reflect a few broader questions: Do codes of ethics, organizational values, and corporate culture serve to enhance the authentic experience of care? Could institutionalized healthcare avail itself of the natural and beneficial caring aspects of human beings? Is authenticity essential to healthcare?

Part 1 - AGAINST EMPATHY

Date: Monday, 30 November 2015

Time: 12:00 – 13:00 MST/MDT

Location: Dvorkin Centre (2G2.07 WMC)

Presented by: **Brendan Leier, PhD**
Clinical Ethicist, Alberta Health Services;
Assistant Clinical Professor, John Dossetor Health Ethics Centre

The concept of empathy is widely considered a virtue or an unquestioned good, particularly in healthcare. But what is empathy? How do people respond when told to act empathetically? Do patients appreciate empathy? In the first part of this talk, I will examine the concept of empathy and situate it historically in philosophical and psychological traditions. In the second part, I will demonstrate how an uncritical acceptance and emphasis on empathy as a clinical skill or virtue can have paradoxical outcomes. I will conclude by proposing a more coherent approach to embracing emotional comportment in health professionals and organizations and suggest a theory of emotional comportment that abandons the concept of empathy.

The following talks TBA: Part 2 - On the Roles of Humor in Healthcare; Part 3 - Reason, Desire, and Health; Part 4 - What is Dignity?

EVERYONE WELCOME!

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