

## PHILOSOPHY IN THE CONTEXT OF HIGHER MEDICAL EDUCATION

### Higher medical educational institution of Ukraine

#### «Ukrainian medical stomatological academy» (Poltava)

**Introduction.** Enhancement of education is to be achieved by training of highly qualified specialists, providing for the formation of comprehensively educated creative personalities [1,2,4].

Recently in Ukrainian society a question of whether in fact there is a real need for compulsory study of some social and humanitarian subjects in high school has been widely discussed. Such disciplines include culture, sociology, political science, philosophy, religious studies, and history of Ukraine.

However, higher medical education institutions of Ukraine support the concept, aimed at the development of intellectual abilities of students. The main tasks of higher education are the formation of analytical and creative thinking, self evaluation, and the ability to apply the acquired knowledge in specific situations of professional and everyday activities. It is the Humanities disciplines, especially the philosophy, as a fundamental branch of knowledge, that are the basis for the development of self-consciousness and value systems of a student. However, the philosophy remains the only comprehensive subject that students consider unnecessary in current educational environment. Thus, the formation of positive attitude of students to study philosophy has become challenging issue nowadays [6].

**Main body.** Nowadays, the prestige of medical profession is impossible without basic competences, extensive practical training, faithful performance of professional duties, required by medical and healthcare professions, and the appropriate level of philosophical culture. In higher medical education institutions students study philosophy as a fundamental humanitarian discipline to master the basics of the world-view culture and skills of abstract thinking, which correspond to current requirements and are necessary minimum for creative thinking, ability to critical analysis of ideas, views, opinions of independently thinking individual, a physician, citizen and scientist.

From the moment of its occurrence the philosophy occupied a special place in the system of knowledge about the world. At all times it is the philosophy that assisted an individual to navigate in the variety of circumstances, contributed to its self-determination. This explains the intransitive vitality of philosophy and the necessity to capture it for reliable orientation in the constantly changing world and for a reasonable approach

to solve the most challenging tasks of survival the mankind are facing nowadays.

Development of skills of reasonable thinking and mastery of philosophical culture requires serious efforts and intellectual tension, since the philosophy gets into the depths of human existence, opens the way to the essence of the universe, makes one to ponder over things that are unknown and unattainable in the vanity of daily life.

Nowadays the philosophy is becoming more democratic, tolerant to preciseness and starts to participate actively in the formation of responses to the historical “challenges” of the epoch. It is acquiring the status of thinking habits of individual of modern society, bringing it closer to an adequate understanding of complex realities of the environment it lives in. Current development of medicine advances special demands to physician’s philosophical culture.

Philosophy is no longer interpreted as a secondary discipline in training of highly educated medical personnel. It is becoming a necessary component of self-determination in modern drama and complex world. Furthermore, this leads to significant update of its didactic function in the process of conceptual and professional formation of a physician of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

For a long time the philosophy and medicine has existed as integral person-oriented phenomena, intended for its adaptation to the surrounding world. In our opinion, the stereotype as for the fact that union of philosophy and medicine is quite clearly reveals itself only in the context of bioethics has been misinterpreted by a wide circle of scientists. It should be noted that philosophical knowledge is crucial for professional development of physicians not only while communicating with patients and for general expertise, but also for creating a modern synthetic knowledge of pathological process and disease in general [7]. It is the philosophy that forms the ability to analyze and synthesize the facts, to model logically the specific situation and system thinking. It should be mentioned that process of humanization of medical knowledge, penetration of methodological principles, techniques and concepts of the Humanities into different fields of medicine is tending to be natural. Relationship of individual groups of concepts in medicine with humanitarian knowledge are different as for expressiveness and quality – from indissoluble and close in psychiatry, medical psychology, neurology

and epidemiology to quite intermediate in morphological and applied medical knowledge (anatomy, radiology, dentistry, etc.) [3]. According to V. L. Kulinichenko, a famous Ukrainian scientist, a widespread use of humanistic style of thinking assists in solving and removing contradictions that emerged in (medical) theory and practice at the previous stages of historical development; contradictions – knowledge of the natural and social, mental and physiological, mental and somatic; “human-centered” and natural-scientific pictures of the world; knowledge, directing towards individual things (a cell, organism, population, individual), to universal basics of genesis (production, practice, beauty, goodness); cognition of elementary human structures and a human being as the integrity of the special kind [3].

Practical medicine has on its way a wide range of problems, the solution of which is impossible without recourse to philosophical traditions.

R. Virchow, a prominent German scientist, made a revolution in medicine when he first proved the human diseases to be of material basis, although he followed the eclectic philosophical views.

For a medical specialist, philosophical problem of the matter and its characteristics are transformed in the problem of the nature of disease, the question of determining the causes of disease, their relationship with the reality, as well as with subjective factors of the human organism and mentality. In other words, here comes the problem of correlation between mental and physiological, natural and spiritual when considering the pathological phenomena, as well as treatment of a patient. Therefore, the analysis of the unity of various phenomena in connection with common matter that acts as the principle of these phenomena is crucial for a physician. [5].

Principles of medicine express the correlation and interdependence between physiological and pathological states of the organs and systems and the environment, as well as common features of the sequence of occurrence and development of pathological processes in the organism, but they do not reflect the individual characteristics of the clinical course in a particular patient. From the philosophical point of view, general pathological processes, including the concept of structure and function, issues of etiology and pathogenesis, diagnostic methodology and other basic elements of basic medical science are combined into the concept of a disease.

At the clinical departments students learn «functional» diseases, while at the classes on philosophy students study the unity of structure and function. Nevertheless, from a theoretical point of view, it should be noted that any functional changes have their morphological equivalent. Functional changes may be reversible and irreversible, due to the different nature of the morphological transformations that provide compensation for modified functions. Morphologically it is manifested in the form of hyperplasia or hypertrophy of the ultra structural components of the cells, bordered with affected area, strengthening of metabolic processes

in their nuclei or cytoplasm. It is due to compensatory processes with different morphological features the function can be continued, despite the destruction of parts of the structural elements that provide a particular function.

No case history can be comprehended and evaluated without forms of thinking, if it misses, at least implicitly, theoretical scheme of etiology, pathogenesis, which, in fact, allow making a selection and assessment of both initial data and findings. Physician's conceptual constructions without primary theoretical provisions will lead to insufficient and undefined evidence and report about nature of a disease. Similarly, this happens when physician's cognitive activity is aimed only at establishing the relationship between symptoms, i. e., cognition and description of ambient background of a disease, but not at structural-functional changes in sick human body and general laws of pathology development, etiology and pathogenesis.

The philosophy teaches a physician to treat all phenomena and processes in their development, continuous change and indissoluble connection with specific conditions. All this contribute to the formation and development of the physician's culture of thinking. Disregard of provisions of general relation and correlation of phenomena and processes leads to one-sided reassessment of the value of macro- and microorganism in the development of the disease, diagnostic clinical and laboratory research, the role of the individual systems of regulation of the organism's vital activity, etc. Due to philosophical categories and principles, physicians investigate the origin of disease and its clinical course, make the diagnosis, find objective processes, occurring in the life activity of the human body, etc.

Therefore, it is practically impossible to create a single theoretical-practical base of medicine from separate facts without constant reliance on philosophy. Only when a physician relies not only on the individual knowledge, but also on knowledge of the general laws of functioning of the organism, treating an individual as a complex biosocial system, he/she can act the most effectively and efficiently. To achieve this goal is only possible on the basis of the synthesis of philosophical and medical knowledge.

Physicians, who are seeking for new ways to advance medical science and improvement of their professional activities, are always feeling in need of philosophical knowledge.

**Conclusions.** Mastering the basics of philosophical knowledge helps student to become professional expert with the ability to think widely and deeply and act independently. The philosophy promotes creative thinking, helps in the study of clinical disciplines, serves as the basis for perception of new ideas, and uses the acquired knowledge to solve the specific tasks. Consequently, new approaches and mechanisms for forming a positive attitude to the study of philosophy, as well as the need to change existing stereotypes in the society should be found in the process of training of medical students.

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#### ФІЛОСОФІЯ В КОНТЕКСТІ ВИЩОЇ МЕДИЧНОЇ ОСВІТИ

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**Резюме.** У статті обґрунтовано значення філософії у процесі світоглядного й професійного формування майбутніх лікарів. Розкрито важливі аспекти її взаємодії з медициною та доведено, що філософія є методологічним фундаментом медичного знання. Тому у процесі професійної підготовки студентів-медиків повинні бути знайдені нові підходи та важелі для формування у них позитивного ставлення до вивчення філософії, а також повинні змінитися існуючі стереотипи в суспільстві.

**Ключові слова:** філософія, медицина, методологія, освіта, теорія.

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#### ФИЛОСОФИЯ В КОНТЕКСТЕ ВЫСШЕГО МЕДИЦИНСКОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ

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**Резюме.** В статье обосновано значение философии в процессе мировоззренческого и профессионального формирования будущих врачей. Раскрыты важные аспекты ее взаимодействия с медициной и доказано, что философия является методологическим фундаментом медицинского знания. Поэтому в процессе профессиональной подготовки студентов-медиков должны быть найдены новые подходы и рычаги для формирования у них положительного отношения к изучению философии, а также должны измениться существующие стереотипы в обществе.

**Ключевые слова:** философия, медицина, методология, образование, теория.

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The philosophy remains the only comprehensive subject that students consider unnecessary in current educational environment.

In higher medical education institutions students study philosophy as a fundamental humanitarian discipline to master the basics of the world-view culture and skills of abstract thinking, which correspond to current requirements and are necessary minimum for creative thinking, ability to critical analysis of ideas, views, opinions of independently thinking individual, a physician, citizen and scientist.

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## МЕДИЧНА ОСВІТА

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Mastering the basics of philosophical knowledge helps student to become professional expert with the ability to think widely and deeply and act independently. The philosophy promotes creative thinking, helps in the study of clinical disciplines, serves as the basis for perception of new ideas, and uses the acquired knowledge to solve the specific tasks. Consequently, new approaches and mechanisms for forming a positive attitude to the study of philosophy, as well as the need to change existing stereotypes in the society should be found in the process of training of medical students.

**Key words:** philosophy, medicine, methodology, education, theory.

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