Ethics Center Journal Club Discussion

“Rethinking Disability: The Social Model of Disability and Chronic Disease”

RRUCLA & SMUCLA

Wednesday, September 14, 2022
12 - 1pm
Via Zoom

Facilitated by:
Joanna Smolenski, PhD

Zoom Link: https://uclahs.zoom.us/j/98361158525?pwd=VmUxVnVKRDRLTzYwcEVvNmt1WHkzUT09
Meeting ID # 983 6115 8525 | Password: 020202

-- Thank you! --
Article for Discussion


About the Course:

Lecture: Disability is often seen as a problem that exists in a person’s body and requires medical treatment. As such, it is a common target for medical intervention, with the aim of either curing, preventing, or “correcting” the disabled body. In this paper, Goering offers an alternative view in the social model of disability, which “distinguishes between impairment and disability, [and identifies] the latter as a disadvantage that stems from a lack of fit between a body and its social environment.” In this September Journal Club, we will explore the social model of disability, and consider how giving serious consideration to this conceptualization of disability could potentially aid medical providers in cultivating positive relationships with their disabled patients.

Speaker: Dr. Joanna Smolenski is the Junior Clinical Ethics Fellow with the UCLA Health Ethics Center. She completed her Ph.D. in Philosophy at the City University of New York (CUNY) Graduate Center in 2021, while also serving as an Ethics Fellow at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai (2019-2021). Prior to pursuing her doctorate, Dr. Smolenski was a John Jay Scholar at Columbia University. Her current research concerns ethical issues in informed consent.

Discussion questions:

1. What do you think are the most important elements of the patient-provider relationship, and how might they be impacted when a patient is disabled?

2. What is the medical model of disability? How does the author contend it contributes to feelings of exclusion or devaluation on the part of disabled patients?

3. How does the author differentiate between “impairment” and “disability”? Are you convinced by her argument that this is a distinction worth drawing?

4. Goering cites philosopher Susan Wendall, who works to end discrimination against the disabled while also seeking a cure for her myalgic encephalomyelitis. In so doing, Wendell identifies a new distinction: healthy vs. unhealthy disability. What do you think about this distinction? Do you find it useful when thinking about chronic pain and the social model of disability?

This course is offered free of charge. Attendees should contact UCLA Health Ethics Center at (310) 794-6219 if you need special accommodations or have questions or concerns.