

Virtual Mentor

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IN THE LITERATURE

The Empathic Physician: Nature and Nurture

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Articles and books on bioethics continue to expand in both number and the range of topics discussed. Between 1989 and 1998, more than 4000 articles alone were published in MEDLINE-cited journals. Some of the major topics examined are the patient-physician relationship, end-of-life care, reproductive medicine, genetics, and the allocation of scarce medical resources. From these publications, we will be selecting a handful of articles and chapters, some of which reflect issues of perennial concern to physicians, others reflect more recent quandries resulting from advances in biomedical technology.

A new article or book chapter will be featured every month, accompanied by questions intended to guide readers along the path of ethical reasoning and to promote discussion.

January Book Chapter

S Glick S. The empathic physician: nature and nurture. In: Spiro H, McCrea Curnen MG, Peschel E, St James D, eds. *Empathy and the Practice of Medicine*. New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press; 1993:85-102.

Questions for Discussion

- How important is empathy in the patient-physician relationship, as compared with medical expertise?
- How is it related to trust?
- How can empathy be taught to physicians in a way that complements the scientific aspects of medicine?

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