

LETTER TO EDITOR

Art and Science Viewpoint in Medicine History

Dear Editor,

Medicine is truly multidisciplinary as it is both an art and a science. Throughout history, medicine has been an integral part of human society. Indeed, in many cultures, healers have been regarded as community leaders as well as guardians of cultural traditions. In the Philippines, healers occupy a complementary position of power and authority (Jocano, 1956). Hence, they hold a significant position of power and authority within their communities, reflecting the deep-rooted respect for their knowledge, skills, and services. This demonstrates the interconnectedness between science and healing as applied in a social setting. To truly appreciate the evolution of medicine, it is important to consider the circumstances that have shaped its development.

Health systems are complex and multifaceted. Indeed, health is not only the absence of disease, but encompasses physical, mental, and social well-being, as well. (Larsen, 2022, pp. 111-131) Through the lens of Post-Normal science where complex issues are tackled with inputs from

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“extended peers” (Funtowicz, and Ravetz, 1994, pp. 1881-1885), various factors influence the health status, including social, political, and economic aspects. To understand the healthcare systems of a society and its development, it is crucial to examine how these systems have evolved and adapted over time. This contributes to identifying opportunities for further progress and improvement in promoting health and well-being.

The study of medicine and its history offers invaluable insights into a society’s culture and development. Dr. Jose Rizal, the National Hero of the Philippines and a physician himself in the 19th century, rightly highlighted this connection when he stated (Rizal, 1912), “In order to read the destiny of a people, it is necessary to open the book of its past”(Rizal, 1912).

Authors’ Contribution

Rodrigo Ong is the main author and proponent of traditional medicine in post normal science point of view. Felipe Jocano contributed the medical anthropological point of view. Antonio Ong contributed perspectives on the social effects of changes and progress of medicine throughout history. All authors read and approved the final version of the work.

Conflict of Interest

None.

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