
Editorial Commentary

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This issue of the Journal introduces two new activities. Dr. Gilbert Berdine presented to Grand Rounds Department of Internal Medicine at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in Lubbock on August 6, 2015. This presentation was entitled “Consciousness: Philosophy, Biology and Physics” and a link to the video of this presentation is available on our Home Page. He has provided the following brief summary of the goals for this presentation.

“My presentation on the Free Will vs. Determinism debate for Internal Medicine Grand Rounds had three broad goals. The first goal was to make students, residents and faculty aware of the debate. The second goal was to offer an alternative to Dr. Cashmore’s position that Determinism is the only position acceptable to a scientist. Others have criticized Dr. Cashmore’s position on the basis of the implications for society. I point out these implications, but one cannot refute an argument because one is unhappy with the logical implications. One must show that a logical implication is also a logical contradiction. Dr. Cashmore is correct that there cannot be a scientific explanation for Free Will since Free Will would become Deterministic rather than Free. I have attempted to show that ‘random’ is not Deterministic and ‘magic’ is not necessarily mysticism but can include axioms that are beyond proof by science (such as conditions prior to the Big Bang). Dr. Cashmore emphasized the implications of Determinism for the criminal justice system. My third goal was to explain that the Free Will vs. Determinism debate has fundamental implications for economics, artificial intelligence, medical decisions and government. Our current legal definition of life and death centers on the physical state of a physical body. Recent advances in neurobiology, as well as the Free Will paradox pointed

out by Dr. Cashmore, suggest that medicine needs to reexamine distinctions between a human being capable of volition and a lump of biologic material incapable of conscious acts.”

Several audience members submitted letters to the Journal discussing this topic, and they are available in the Table of Contents.

The Journal has published an article on statistical methods and analysis in each issue. These articles should help readers develop and analyze projects with clinical data. Using clinical data and writing for medical journals require substantial effort and practice; the Journal plans to support these efforts with articles on medical writing. Dr. Kristen Messuri, Associate Director for the Writing Center at Texas Tech University and Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, has written an article on scientific writing entitled “Clarity in medical writing”. She offers important suggestions to both novice and experienced writers; this article can be found in the Table of Contents.

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