



Movies for Health Professionals and Humanity

“Indeed, ethics itself is enriched by the insights & data of these other disciplines; for example, a theatrical presentation of a clinical dilemma can be more powerful stimulus for ethical reflection & analysis than a simple case description.”

Medical Ethics Manual by the World Medical Association, 2005

Background

The halo that used to accompany health professionals in Lebanon and elsewhere is fading. This is partly due to poor communication skills- mainly lack of empathy, and considering medicine as a job and not a career. The dismay of the public was transmitted to movie theatres, newspapers, and other public media. We intend to do something about that.

The plan

Show movies that highlight problems in communication/behavior of doctors or deal with debatable medical issues. The movies suggested are: Wit, The Doctor, City of Joy, Patch Adams, The Sea Inside, and others. Five films will be displayed over an academic year; a brief discussion and a buffet will follow the show.

About the films

- *Wit*: Starring Emma Thompson who plays the role of an English Literature professor, develop an end stage ovarian cancer. In the hospital she is treated as a subject of interest for research. This makes her reflect on her own life and 'finds enlightenment through her struggle with cancer'. Medical educators have used this film/theater to teach the concept of empathy and others.

Duration: 90 min

- *The Doctor*: William Hurt is a surgeon who teaches his residents to distance themselves from emotions. Everything changes when he develops a tumor and becomes in the patient's shoes.

Duration: 123 minutes

- *City of Joy*: Patrick Swayze decided to abandon surgery after the death of a patient he operated on. In a poor Calcutta community he meets a nurse running a free clinic. After witnessing the brutality of the local 'Godfather' he discovers that he can do a lot to help.

Duration: 135 minutes

- *Patch Adams*: Robin Williams decide to become a doctor after suffering from a mental health problem. In the hospital he experienced the shortcomings of the health profession. His unorthodox approach to patients stirs a lot of emotions and controversy.

Duration: 110 minutes

- *The Sea Inside*: This Spanish movie talks about a quadriplegic man who is searching for a loving friend to help him end his life. This film won an Academy Award.
- *One True Thing*: Merrill strip develops terminal cancer. The family has to adapt to a new situation; who will attend to the patient who at the end request to be given an overdose to end the suffering.

The above list is not exclusive; other films can be added if they fulfill the above objectives.

Who will promote this?

Mohamad Kodeih, RSO President; Bassel Raad, IMRS President; LEMSIC-SECOMÉ ; Internal medicine and family medicine residents' societies; others.