

DIANE O'LEARY, PHD
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NARRATIVE

I am an independent researcher whose work considers metaphysical, clinical and ethical issues that arise around the mind-body line in medicine. Following my PhD, I was academically inactive for fifteen years. During that period I struggled with serious illness, as I pursued the reading and writing that formed the foundation for my current work.

In 2016, I was able to return to academic life as Visiting Researcher at Kennedy Institute of Ethics, then Visiting Faculty at Rotman Institute of Philosophy and, recently, Visiting Fellow at Pittsburgh's Center for Philosophy of Science. My first publication after returning was a 2018 target article published with twelve commentaries. Since that time I've published nine more articles in top journals and collections, delivering twenty presentations to philosophers, clinicians, patients, bioethicists and the general public. I am intermittently disabled by chronic disease, and this is no longer a reality I hide in academic settings. I am committed to raising awareness about research by academics who are disabled, particularly women whose disabilities are invisible. Independent research is often high quality, impactful research.

CURRENT AND RECENT POSITIONS

Independent Scholar in Philosophy of Medicine, Philosophy of Mind, and Bioethics, Sep 2016-present.

Visiting Fellow (faculty), Center for Philosophy of Science, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh PA, Aug 2020-Dec 2020.

Visiting Fellow (faculty), Rotman Institute of Philosophy, Western University, London ON, Canada, Oct 2018-Dec 2019.

Adjunct Full Professor in Philosophy, University of Maryland Global Campus, Adelphi MD, Jan 2015-present.

Course Chair in Philosophy, University of Maryland Global Campus, Adelphi MD, Feb 2017-Aug 2019 [position discontinued].

Visiting Fellow in Philosophy of Medicine and Bioethics, Fondation Brocher, Geneva, Switzerland, Mar 2018-May 2018.

Visiting Researcher, Kennedy Institute of Ethics, Georgetown University, Sep 2016-Sep 2018.

Visiting Adjunct Instructor in Ethics, Trinity Washington University, Sep 2014-Dec 2014.

Adjunct Instructor in Philosophy [intermittently], South New Hampshire University, Sep 2012-present.

Associate Faculty in Philosophy [intermittently], University of Arizona Global Campus, Aug 2009-present.

EDUCATION

PhD Philosophy, University of Sydney, 1999
MA Philosophy, Syracuse University, 1991
MA Liberal Arts, St. John's College, 1987
BMus Music Composition, Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University, 1985

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Philosophy of Medicine, Philosophy of Mind, Bioethics, General Ethics, Ancient Greek Philosophy

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

Diagnostic Error, Applied Metaphysics, Social Justice Issues, Interdisciplinary Humanities, Early Modern Philosophy, Informal and Formal Logic, Philosophy and the Arts

PUBLICATIONS

“How to be a holist who rejects the biopsychosocial model”. Forthcoming in *European Journal of Analytic Philosophy*.

“The value of consciousness in medicine” (2021). In U. Kriegel (Ed.), *Oxford Studies in Philosophy of Mind, Vol 1*. (pp. 65-85). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
DOI:10.1093/oso/9780198845850.003.0003.

“Paroxysmal supraventricular tachycardia masquerading as panic attacks”, with David Martin. *AHRQ Patient Safety Network, Morbidity and Mortality Rounds*, June 30, 2021.
<https://psnet.ahrq.gov/web-mm/paroxysmal-supraventricular-tachycardia-masquerading-panic-attacks>.

“Medicine’s metaphysical morass: How confusion about dualism threatens public health”. *Synthese* (2020), DOI 10.1007/s11229-020-02869-9.

“A concerning display of medical indifference”. *Medical Humanities* Volume 46, Number 4:e4 (2020).
DOI:10.1136/medhum-2019-011743.

“Ethical psychotherapeutic management of medically unexplained symptoms”, with Keith Geraghty. In M. Trachsel, Gabb J, Biller-Adorno N and Tekin S (Eds.) *Oxford Handbook of Psychotherapy Ethics*. Oxford, Oxford University Press. DOI 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198817338.013.72.

“Ethical classification of ME/CFS in the United Kingdom”. *Bioethics*, Volume 33, Number 6 (2019): 716-722. DOI:10.1111/bioe.12559.

“Bodily distress syndrome: Concerns about scientific credibility in research and implementation”. *Journal of Biological Physics and Chemistry, Special Issue on Scientific Integrity*, Volume 18 (2018): 67-77. DOI:10.4024/07LE18A.jbpc.18.02.

“Ethical management of diagnostic uncertainty: Reply to open peer commentaries on ‘Why bioethics

should be concerned with medically unexplained symptoms””. *American Journal of Bioethics*, Volume 18, Number 8 (2018): W6-W11. DOI:10.1080/15265161.2018.1481241.

“Why bioethics should be concerned with medically unexplained symptoms”. *American Journal of Bioethics*, Volume 18, Number 5 (2018): 6-15. DOI:10.1080/15265161.2018.1445312.

“Not-being and linguistic deception”. *Apeiron: A Journal for Ancient Philosophy and Science*, Volume 29, Number 4 (1996): 165-198. DOI:10.1515/APEIRON.1996.29.4.165.

“Theaetetan epistemology as platonic epistemology”. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, Volume 73, Number 1 (1995): 49-70. DOI:10.1080/00048409512346381.

PRESENTATIONS

(*featured speaker)

* “Safe, sound and respectful management of diagnostic uncertainty” [tentative title]. Berman Institute of Bioethics Seminar Series, Johns Hopkins University, Mar 28, 2022.

“What are symptoms? Making sense of subjective evidence in medical science”, 9th Philosophy of Medicine Roundtable, Michigan State University, Jun 27, 2021.

* “A physician and a philosopher on long Covid’s mind-body mystery”, with Adam Gaffney. STAT News First Opinion Podcast, May 5, 2021. <https://www.statnews.com/2021/05/05/physician-philosopher-discuss-long-covid-mind-body-mystery/>.

* “Mind, Body and Diagnostic Error”, Live webinar for Sheffield ME and Fibromyalgia Group. Sheffield, UK. Nov 20, 2020.

“Making Philosophical Sense of Medicine’s Position on Mind and Body”, Lunchtime Talk, Center for Philosophy of Science, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA. Oct 16, 2020.

* “The Value of Consciousness in Medicine”, Workshop on Consciousness and Medical Ethics, Rice University Department of Philosophy, Houston, TX. Feb 20, 2020.

* “Is Current Management of Medically Unexplained Symptoms Safe?”, Live webinar for the Patient Safety Action Network. Washington, DC. Feb 12, 2020.

* “‘All in Your Head’: Medicine’s Worrisome Struggle with Experience as Evidence”, Rotman Institute of Philosophy Annual Public Lecture Series, London, ON. Nov 21, 2019.

* “How Can We Do Better with Medically Unexplained Symptoms?” Speaker and panelist with Danielle Ofri and Jennifer Sheehy. Patient Summit: Diagnostic Error in Medicine 12th Annual International Conference, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Washington, D.C. Nov 10, 2019.

- “Improving Communication and Diagnosis in Cases of Medically Unexplained Symptoms”. Diagnostic Error in Medicine 12th Annual International Conference, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Washington, D.C. Nov 11, 2019.
- * “Medicine’s Metaphysical Morass”. Rotman Institute/Brain and Mind Institute joint coffee hour presentation, Rotman Institute of Philosophy, London, ON. Mar 28, 2019.
- * “Making Philosophical Sense of Psychosomatic Symptoms”. Work-in-progress presentation, Rotman Institute of Philosophy, London, ON. Feb 27, 2019.
- “‘Causes in the Mind’: Ethical and Legal Challenges with Medicine’s Most Common Diagnosis”. Organizer, moderator, and presenter for panel discussion, American Society for Bioethics and Humanities, Anaheim CA. Oct 21, 2018.
- “Ethics and the Ambiguity of ‘Medically Unexplained Symptoms’”. Fondation Brocher, Geneva, Switzerland. Apr 5, 2018.
- * “Bodily Stress Syndrome in ICD-11-PHC: Impact on Patients with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis”. Forward-ME, a coalition of patient advocacy organizations, House of Lords, London, UK. Mar 28, 2018.
- “Ethical Challenges in the Context of Medically Unexplained Symptoms”. Fondation Brocher, Geneva, Switzerland. Mar 6, 2018.
- “Why Bioethics Should be Concerned with Medically Unexplained Symptoms”. Kennedy Institute of Ethics, Washington DC. Oct 24, 2017.
- “Why Clinical Ethics Should Contribute to the Question of Medically Unexplained Symptoms”. American Society for Bioethics and Humanities, Kansas City, MO. Oct 21, 2017.
- * “An Ethical Path Forward on the Question of NICE Guideline Revisions for ME/CFS”. Forward-ME, a coalition of patient advocacy organizations, House of Lords, London, UK. Jul 11, 2017.
- * “Ethical Decision Making About Chronic Lyme Disease”. Video presentation to the UN Special Rapporteur on Health and Human Rights as a member of the Global Ad Hoc Committee for Health Equity in ICD11 Borreliosis Codes. Jun 8, 2017. <https://youtu.be/2iQweqOZnXU>.
- “The Gender Principle as a Barrier to Healthcare Access for Women”. International Congress on Women’s Health Issues. Baltimore MD. Nov 9, 2016.
- * “‘All in Your Head’: The Problem of Psychogenic Diagnosis for Ehlers-Danlos Patients”. Live webinar for the Ehlers-Danlos Awareness Foundation. Jun 7, 2016.*
- “Patient Resentment and Doctor Frustration in Psychogenic Diagnosis: How Informed Consent Shows Us a Better Way”. Hastings Center for Bioethical Research and Public Policy, Garrison NY. Feb 17, 2016.
- “Ethical Issues Related to Psychogenic Diagnosis”. Hastings Center for Bioethical Research and Public Policy, Garrison NY. Feb 4, 2016.

- * “Mistaken Denial of Medical Care for Periodic Paralysis Patients”. Biannual Periodic Paralysis Association Conference, Orlando, FL. Oct 24, 2015.
- “Plato’s Phaedrus and the Metaphysical Basis for Plato’s Decision to Write Dialogues”. Georgetown University Department of Philosophy, Washington, DC. Dec 1994.
- * “Reading Plato”. Australian National University Department of Philosophy. Canberra, Australia. Oct 1994.
- “Not-Being and Linguistic Deception”. Meeting of the Australasian Society for Ancient Philosophy, Sydney University. Sydney, Australia. Mar 1993.
- “Theaetetan Epistemology as Platonic Epistemology”. Meeting of the Australasian Society for Ancient Philosophy, Sydney University. Sydney, Australia. Mar 1992.
- “Metaphilosophy in Plato’s Phaedrus”. Meeting of the Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy, City University of New York, New York NY. Oct 1990.

ACADEMIC AND PUBLIC WRITING WITHOUT PEER REVIEW

- “Tell the truth about the scientific challenge to ‘chronic fatigue syndrome’”, *British Medical Journal* Rapid Response, June 26, 2021. <https://www.bmj.com/content/373/bmj.n1559/rr-7>.
- “Needed for long covid: A less authoritarian approach”, STAT News First Opinion, April 22, 2021. <https://www.statnews.com/2021/04/22/long-covid-less-authoritarian-approach-needed/>.
- “A balanced view of animosity between researchers and the public”, *Journal of the Norwegian Medical Association* Commentary, March 25, 2021. <https://tidsskriftet.no/2021/03/kommentar/balanced-view-animosity-between-researchers-and-public>.
- “Re: ‘Management of post-acute covid in primary care’”, *British Medical Journal* Rapid Response, Aug 21, 2020. <https://www.bmj.com/content/370/bmj.m3026/rr-6>.
- “It’s time to pay attention to ‘chronic fatigue syndrome’”, *Journal of Medical Ethics* Blog, Mar 5, 2019 (with 23,000 visits).
- “Diagnostic dispute in Pelletier case should be seen as resolved”. Letter to the editor, *Boston Globe*, May 17, 2014.
- “Clash with doctors should not shut parents out of the process”. Letter to the editor, *Boston Globe*, Jan 17, 2014.
- “The solution to diagnostic delay may be closer than we think”. Guest blog for National Organization for Rare Disorders, Jan 6, 2014.

“Diagnostic Ethics: Harms vs. Benefits of Somatic Symptom Disorder”, with Allen Frances MD (Chair of DSM-IV Task Force). *Huffington Post, Psychology Today and Psychiatric Times*, Dec 15, 2013.

“Hippocratic Humility”, (Chair of DSM-IV Task Force). *Huffington Post, Psychology Today and Psychiatric Times*, May 7, 2013.

“Peculiar silence: The problem of error in diagnosis of somatic symptom disorder”. Response to “The new somatic symptom disorder in DSM-5 risks mislabeling many people as mentally ill”. *British Medical Journal Rapid Response*, Mar 28, 2013.

INTERVIEWS

“A physician and a philosopher on long Covid’s mind-body mystery”, with Adam Gaffney. STAT News First Opinion Podcast, May 5, 2021. <https://www.statnews.com/2021/05/05/physician-philosopher-discuss-long-covid-mind-body-mystery/>.

“The Medical System Should Have Been Prepared for Long Covid” by Alan Levinovitz. VICE News, March 18, 2010. <https://www.vice.com/en/article/qjpywp/the-medical-system-should-have-been-prepared-for-long-haul-covid-patients-symptoms>.

“Ethics, Philosophy, and Causes in the Mind”. “Undiagnosis Podcast” with author Marcus Sedgwick. Forthcoming.

“The Case of Justina Pelletier and the Problem of Mistaken Denial of Care”. Intelligent Medicine Podcast with Dr. Ron Hoffman. Mar 12, 2014.

“Diagnosing Rare Diseases”. Interview for “Discuss the Mental Health Manual”, a MOOC for mental health professionals focused on the new DSM-5, sponsored by Alliant University. Feb 27, 2013.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO HEALTH POLICY

Proposal to reject “bodily distress disorder” as a replacement for somatoform disorders in ICD-11 on ethical grounds. ICD-11 Beta Draft online, Mar 2017. (Note: this proposal remained in debate by the WHO for over two years, when it was escalated to the Medical Scientific Advisory Committee for the ICD.)

Managing mind-body uncertainty in guidelines for “chronic Lyme disease”. Comments on Draft Guideline for Lyme Disease, Infectious Disease Society of America. Aug 2019.

Video statement to UN Special Rapporteur for Health and Human Rights as a member of the Global Ad Hoc Committee on Health Equity in ICD-11 Borreliosis Codes, meeting Jun 13, 2017. <https://youtu.be/2iQweqOZnXU>.

Proposal evaluating diagnostic criteria for myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome in ICD-11

on ethical grounds. ICD-11 Beta Draft online, Apr 2017.

Stakeholder consultation comments on NICE guideline revision for ME/CFS, in collaboration with the Countess of Mar, on behalf of Forward-ME, Jul 2017.

Comments to hearing on Functional Disorders. Letter to the Health and Prevention Committee of the Danish Parliament on “bodily distress syndrome”, Mar 2014.

HONORS

Participant, Beyond the Ivory Tower: A Workshop for Scholars on Writing for the Public, with James Ryerson, Lisa Feldman Barrett and David DeSteno, Northeastern University. Nov 11-12, 2021.

Fellowship, Philosophy of Medicine, Philosophy of Mind, and Bioethics, Center for Philosophy of Science, University of Pittsburgh. Aug 2020-Dec 2020.

Fellowship, Philosophy of Medicine, Philosophy of Mind, and Bioethics, Rotman Institute of Philosophy, Western University. Sep 2018-Dec 2019.

Faculty Award in Professional Achievement, University of Maryland Global Campus. Nov 2018.

Fellowship, Philosophy of Medicine and Bioethics, Brocher Foundation. Mar-May, 2018.

Fellowship in Poetry, MacDowell Colony for the Arts. Sep-Oct 2004.

Recipient in Philosophy, Australian Postgraduate Research Award. 1993-94, 1994-95.

EXPERT LEGAL TESTIMONY

I have served as an expert witness in cases where parents and clinicians disagree about diagnosis at the mind-body line in children. I am the only (non-clinician) philosopher accepted by the State of Massachusetts to testify about the medical standard of care, based on a *voir dire* process where I defended the relevance of ethics to the medical standard of care for the benefit of the court.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Medicine’s Mind-Body Problem: A Simple, Sound and Clinically Actionable Solution

“Dualism is not separation of mind and body. What does this mean for medicine?”

“What are symptoms? Making sense of subjective experience in medical science”

“A naturalistic account of disease that centers on subjective experience.”

“A consciousness-centered approach to bioethics: How to respect autonomy in those who lack decision-making capacity.”

“Are ‘conversion’ symptoms possible without split minds?”

COURSES TAUGHT

(*upper level)

Introduction to Philosophy

Introduction to Bioethics

Introduction to Ethics

Informal Logic and Critical Thinking

Introduction to Humanities

Mind and Machine

Formal Logic

Business Ethics

Philosophy of Mind in the 21st Century*

Metaphysical Ideas for the 21st Century*

Early Modern Philosophy*

Theoretical Ethics: Utilitarianism, Deontology and Virtue Ethics*

Bioethics for Nursing Professions*

Ancient Greek Philosophy*

Plato*

Social Justice Issues*

Eastern Religions*

Humanities Capstone*

Past teaching positions: University of Sydney, St. John’s College, Syracuse University, Trinity Washington University, Kaplan University, University of Maryland Global Campus, University of Arizona Global Campus, Southern New Hampshire University.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Member, The Primary-Care Research in Diagnostic Errors (PRIDE) Learning Network, meeting monthly.
Hosted by the Brigham and Women’s Center for Patient Safety Research and Practice.

Member, Association for the Scientific Study of Consciousness

Member, Society for the Improvement of Diagnostic Medicine

Member, International Congress on Women’s Health Issues

Member, American Society for Bioethics and Humanities

REFERENCES

Gordon Schiff MD, Associate Director, Brigham and Women's Center for Patient Safety Research and Practice; Associate Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School, Boston MA.

Michael Anderson PhD, Rotman Canada Research Chair in Philosophy of Science; Core Member, Rotman Institute of Philosophy and Brain and Mind Institute. Western University, London ON, Canada.

Edouard Machery PhD, Distinguished Professor and Director of the Center for Philosophy of Science, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh PA.

David L. Meyers MD, Bioethicist, former Chair of Emergency Medicine at Sinai Hospital in Baltimore; Board of Directors, Society to Improve Diagnosis in Medicine, Baltimore MD.

Robert Veatch PhD, Senior Research Scholar, Professor Emeritus of Medical Ethics. Kennedy Institute of Ethics, Georgetown University, Washington DC. [Prof. Veatch passed away in 2020. I am able to send his letter anonymously through Interfolio upon request.]

The Countess of Mar, Hereditary Peer and politician, retired. House of Lords, London, UK.

Steven Killings PhD. Chair, Humanities and Philosophy Program, University of Maryland Global Campus, Adelphi MD.