Narrative Medicine Theory and Practice: The Double Helix Model

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The genesis of the medical humanities as an academic discipline engendered a need for a theoretical framework, which narrative medicine provided. Now, it is one of the most significant domains of thought within the medical humanities. This talk traces the development of narrative medicine, particularly through the Columbia School initially led by Rita Charon, and critically examines its implicit goals and theoretical assumptions as they have changed over time. A new approach to narratological medicine, the double helix model, is outlined and placed in dialogue with the Columbia School’s version of narrative medicine, with the goal of improving narrative medicine theory and practice.

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