UJ ACEPS Reflection Series: Health in African Philosophy

ACEPS
African Centre for Epistemology and Philosophy of Science

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

Date: Tuesday 20th August 2024
Time: 10:00 am -12:00 pm
Venue: Boardroom 11th Floor, UJ on Empire

Reasserting African Agency in Medical Machine Learning Technology for Treatment Recommendations: African Indigenous Knowledge to the Rescue

Abstract: Machine learning technologies deployed in several sub-Saharan African countries to assist medical practitioners have shown how such technologies can significantly extend the reach of limited medical personnel and equipment resources. However, while I appraise the efficiency of these technologies in carrying out medical diagnosis and treatment recommendations, I raise some critical concerns about the normative shift that may occur in their usage in the sub-Sahel. I argue that Overreliance on these technologies may threaten shared decision-making between patients and doctors. While shared decision-making is an integral component of patient-centred care in contemporary medicine that ought to be always respected, from a phenomenological perspective, the stakes are higher for sub-Saharan Africans. For Africans, the threat of shared decision-making may negatively impact what constitutes moral agency – interpersonal relationships. I contend that overreliance on machine learning technology for clinical diagnosis and recommendations may diminish the value of interpersonal relationships between patients and doctors. From the paradigm of an African indigenous knowledge thought, I how how vital these normative values are in the making of a person and their moral agency within the sub-Saharan African value systems; on the other hand, I show how interpersonal relationships may contribute to curative medicine and patient health wholeness.

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Zoom Link: https://zoom.us/j/98967628967

Organisers: Dr. Paul Michael, Dr. Garikai Madavo & Dr. L. Uchenna Ogbonnaya

Funding: National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences

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