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Editorial

What does it mean to take care of someone? That was the first question I asked myself when I came across the research in the health sector and, more precisely, in Nursing, of which professionals commonly suggest care as the essence of their practices. It is natural to have doubts about the activity we exercise or on our research, however, this questioning of the concept of care has a philosophical and epistemological character here, given my interest in relating both areas.

The question I want to address here, therefore, relates to the concept of care itself. In order to reach a validity that does not only serve for rapprochement between philosophy and the health area, but also for the development of the practice of care, regardless of the professional that claims it as their own.

A definition that seems appropriate to analyze first, is that care is an act that links one person to another, or to himself, in a way to assist in the development of certain skills or the full development of the human being (SIGNORETTE, 2002). This care concept significantly extends the field of vision and action of “care professionals” since one should not perceive its profession in a strictly technical way, but mainly in a humane way. Care should be seen as the exercise of humanization itself, a process of transformation and human development.

It is with this notion that I can say that the relationship between philosophy and health is fundamental, given that philosophy deals with issues that are directed to all the things, and, giving that the man is one of the beings capable of giving meaning to the rest of the world, he becomes the center of his own significance and philosophical studies on the totality of things. The health of body and spirit is in this aspect essential for the human to follow his path in the meaning of the things of the world and of himself. Therefore, care should not be seen as a technical apparatus for the relief or prevention of pain, but as a process of development of human capabilities (of self and other) in order to give support to all this movement of world significance accomplished by man.

Moreover, the relationship between Philosophy and Health is not new, it has existed for a long time, because since Socrates, who was considered by many a doctor of the soul, this approach has been developed and sustained. It is in this aspect that I mean to evoke the notion of care from a Greek perspective, for this angle is the one that better fits what I mean to express as a conception of care.

A good example of this reading of care was given by the Hellenist philosopher Epicurus of Samos (341-270 BC), founder of the Epicurean school, which closely followed the Socratic teaching. According to him, happiness is the goal of human life, and must be characterized mainly by the presence of pleasure. Not *hedonism*, the indiscriminate pursuit of pleasure, but *ataraxia*, pleasure as the possibility of no pain, or even, the tranquility or imperturbability of the spirit. This is only possible by the restraint of desires propitiated by philosophical meditation. It is in this sense that the model of the wise, which only sought a theoretical and abstract knowledge, was surpassed by the model of the philosopher that seeks a more correct way of living through the tranquility of spirit and moderation (balance) of desires.

The pleasure is natural, however, should not be sought at any cost, because they lead only to the satisfaction of desires and not the tranquility of spirit.

According to Epicurus, happiness is the ultimate goal of man, it should be ranked as the end to all human goals and actions: "It is, therefore, necessary to take **care** of things that bring **happiness**, since when it is present, we have everything, and without it, we do everything to achieve it" (EPICURUS, 2002, p. 43, personal clipping). You can see here that care appointed by Epicurus is directed to things that bring happiness, and considering happiness that which brings peace of mind, it becomes necessary to take care of things that lead to a moderation of pleasure, so that no man is slave of his own desires. Hence, the concept of care can be thought of a much broader way, so that it is connected to all practices of man, involving both corporal and spiritual (psychological) dimension.

Care, in this perspective, does not belong solely to the nursing or the health area, but to all human activity, whatever it may be. It is in this sense that this concept converges the interpretation that Michel Foucault, french philosopher (1926-1984), granted the "self-care", especially in his interpretations of the concept of freedom in ancient Greece, where he identified the freedom to work with oneself and others. Thus "self-care is ethical in itself; but involves complex relationships with others, as this ethos of freedom is also a way to take care of others" (Foucault, 2004, p. 270). Therefore, freedom for this interpretation of Foucault, is the very expression of care, being not only an ethical activity but also political, as in Ancient Greece one was indistinguishable from the other. Consequently, "self-care" also expressed a concern for the other, enabling the improvement of mankind and the development of their potential.

This Greek vision of care provides a reflection on the "Self" and the world that surrounds it, allowing, as a result, a relationship between micro and macro for the setting up of contact between the "Self" of each individual with the community and nature, shows that consciousness and behavior (which is micro for it is part of the "Self") are molded from the world and others (which is macro, as it is part of the whole and the collectivity) .

I hope the approach of the concept of care outlined here may allow the reader to reflect on its practices in order to contribute not only to the extension of the concept, but also to one's development as a human. If the concept of care is used in this broad sense, it should be seen as a task of the whole society and not only of health professionals, guaranteeing a better addressing of the public health problem, given that the very human health will also be approached in a broader sense, facilitating the reform of minds and society.

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