

to the investigation and documentation of physician participation would reaffirm our Profession's dedication to the highest ethical standard. The commission would facilitate the use of this data so that such egregious lapses in physician behavior can be considered in the licensing process. Such a project is likely to encounter significant political opposition, though RI Senator Whitehouse is a leader in advocating for accountability in this matter. Funding for this effort could come from contributions from medical organizations, the public and grants.

Each licensing board then would weigh the evidence in each case relative to state law and in accordance with due process decide if the doctor should retain the right to practice. Since licensing boards have little or no experience in this arena, the national Federation of State Licensing Boards should promulgate guidelines to assist the state boards. One barrier to this process is the reluctance of licensing boards to tackle this issue. Public pressure, however, may play a role in forcing the process.

In a parallel situation federal policy requires government lawyers found guilty of professional misconduct by the Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of Professional Responsibility to be referred to their state bar disciplinary tribunal unless

the guilty finding is overturned on internal DOJ appeal.¹

Medical organizations also should educate their members about their ethical responsibilities and the consequences of ignoring them.

The argument that doctors who participate in torture are absolved of their ethical responsibilities and therefore do not deserve to suffer consequences, because the government declared these actions legal, is not valid.

REFERENCES

1. Letter to Sheldon Whitehouse from Ronald Weich, May 4, 2009 <http://whitehouse.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2009-05-04%20DOJ%20Letter%20to%20SW.pdf>

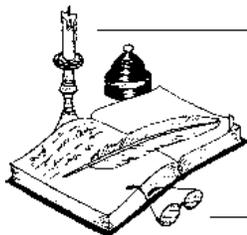
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Physician's Lexicon

The Couched Words of Psychoanalysis

Greek mythology has provided the art of psychoanalysis with a multitude of metaphoric tales and immortal characters; and certainly the myths of Oedipus, Eros and Psyche must be preeminent amongst these wondrous stories.

The ruler of Thebes, Laius, and his wife, Iocaste, were childless. And so Laius sought guidance from the Delphic Oracle, who warned him that any son born to Iocaste would ultimately slay him. Iocaste then caused Laius to be intoxicated, Laius, in inebriated confusion, caused Iocaste to become pregnant. A son was born nine months hence and Laius had the infant abandoned on a mountain side but first Laius had the infant's feet pierced with nails. A shepherd found the helpless infant; and because of his injured and swollen feet, named him Oedipus [Greek for swollen, as in the word oedema; feet, as in pedal.]

The adult Oedipus killed Laius in a roadside encounter, not knowing that the victim was his father; nor did Laius know his biological relationship to his slayer. Oedipus then married the widow of Laius, Iocaste, thus fulfilling the morbid incest prophesy of the Oracle, and, in passing, provided a core theme of modern psychiatry with a fitting mythic icon.

The other crucial terms in narrative psychiatry pale in vitality to Oedipus. The word, anxiety, is from the Latin, *anxietas*, meaning variously anguish or solicitude. Etymologists trace it further to the Latin, *angere*, meaning to press together, to throttle, and ultimately, the source of the English words, anger and angina. Depression descends from the Latin, *depressare*, meaning to press down, to plant deeply; and earlier, from the Latin *premere*, to squeeze, to weigh heavily upon.

Psyche, a maiden in Greek mythology was loved by Eros and became the earthly personification of the human soul. A psychiatrist, hence, is a healer of the soul. The Greek root, *iatros*, means physician [as in pediatrician, geriatrician and iatrogenic.]

Eros—while undeniably the Greek god of love—was never considered powerful enough to be amongst the twelve Olympian Board of Directors; still he was not to be denied a legitimate role in the creation of new English words such as erotic, erogenous and erotomania, and in the male name, Erasmus, meaning a loved one. The word, erosion, however, is derived from the Latin, *erodere*, meaning to gnaw or consume.

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