



VALUES AND HEALTH CARE: BIOETHICAL CHALLENGES WITHIN THE NIGERIAN CONTEXT

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Abstract:

This work deals with the question of values and health care, with specific attention to the bioethical challenges within the Nigerian context. The examination of the word “value” in its etymological origins, indicates that the English word “value” has its roots in the Latin word “valere” which translates closely into the expression “worth.” The same Latin root “valere” is at the origins of the English word “valor” which signifies strength and vigour, as expressions of positive energy, dynamism and vitality. From a different perspective, a further examination, from the point of view of the Greeks, indicates that the Greek word for “worth” is “αξια” “axia” from which is derived the word “axiology” which points towards the systematic study of value. This work pays attention to the question of “value”, especially in relation to the question of health and health care. It examines the question of value from a variety of perspectives, towards achieving greater insight and appreciation of the complexities involved with regard to the analysis of value. The work also examines the question of health and the healthcare system. In the light of the complex nature of the question of values and health care, this work adopts the interdisciplinary methodology as a preferential methodological option, in dealing with multifaceted issues in bioethical research. The research, as part of its conclusion, affirms that there are serious health care challenges within the Nigerian context. The work also affirms that the promotion of values especially within the context of health care, most significantly the values of freedom, responsibility, beneficence, truth, knowledge, peace, security, justice and cooperation would contribute greatly towards the enhancement of the good of human persons, human wellbeing and human flourishing.

Keywords: value, health care, freedom, responsibility, beneficence, truth, justice

1. Introductory Remarks

Life is the foundation for every blessing in human existence. Health is of great value in light of the fundamental importance of life. The fundamental goal of this work is to

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examine the question of values in relation to health care. This examination envisages the task of giving special attention to the bioethical challenges within the Nigerian context. The question of value is important, whether at the overtly conscious level of human existence or at the subliminal level in which the conscious and intellectual powers are in abeyance. In diverse ways, values influence persons in their lives, thoughts, decisions and actions. Values are relevant to persons and persons are interested in values.

In light of the significance of values, the work examines the question of values from a variety of perspectives. The goal is not oriented towards a new paradigm. The goal is also not to carry out the task in terms of Nietzsche's will to power and what he refers to as the transvaluation of all values: "Wille zur Macht" und "Umwertung aller Werte." In the view of Nietzsche: *"Values and their changes are related to increases in the power of those positing the values... To this extent, nihilism, as the denial of a truthful world, of being, might be a divine way of thinking"* (Nietzsche, 14-15). Philosophically prescinding from the radically schizophrenic divine way of thinking of Nietzsche, which opens up to existential nihilism. The primordial task in this work, albeit parenthetically, will include in the language of John Rawls, the attempt towards arriving at what could be called reflective equilibrium (Rawls, 42), for greater insight and a more robust integral perspective, that is capable of elucidating philosophical wisdom in dealing with the challenges of value and health care.

The work will also pay attention to the question of health in its complexities. It will examine the Nigerian health care system and the bioethical challenges within the Nigerian context, especially in the light of the question of the eclipse of values. The conclusion will pay attention to the importance as well as the need to promote a culture of "worthwhile values" especially in relation to health care and the health care system. The valorousness of the human spirit points to the great capacity of human persons to cope with existential adversity at various levels and moments of existence. People tend to cope well with other adversities when their mental, physical and emotional health operates at optimal levels of existential efficiency. But where do people draw the strength and resources to cope, when their mental, physical and emotional health has calamitously precipitated into disastrous states? Therein lies the importance of life and health, in the promotion of other values in human existence. Health is important, because of the grandeur of life, and health is not like other goods in human existence. Health or the lack of it touches human persons at fundamental levels of their existence. Questions of life and health are existential questions. In the light of these, health care and medical practice are significant in human existence. This also situates medicine as a profession in a context that distinguishes it from every other profession.

"Medicine does, in fact, derive much of its method, logic, and theory from the physical and biological sciences, so it is to a certain extent a branch of those sciences. But medicine is also a praxis in the Aristotelian sense – knowledge applied for human ends and purposes. In this sense, medicine can be classed among the technologies. But medicine also sets out to modify behaviour of individuals and societies, and thus has roots in the behavioural sciences. Finally, medicine operates through a personal, and therefore an ethical,

relationship intended to “help” the person to “better” health. It is a value-laden activity, with roots in ethics and the humanities.” (Pellegrino and Thomasma, 22)

The health care professions in general and in a very specific way medicine, are not like other professions, this is so, in the light of the grandeur of human life. Medicine as expressed by Edmund Pellegrino, who also doubles as a physician and a philosopher, and David Thomasma, is *the most humane of the sciences and the most scientific of the humanities* (Pellegrino and Thomasma, 61). The science of medicine as well as the practice of medicine must be carried out within the context of fundamental moral values for the flourishing of human life. Medicine that is not scientifically correct is bound to be morally bankrupt.

Josef Seifert offers some basic factors that should serve as distinguishing characteristics of the medical profession:

- 1) Science – the scientific basis of medical interventions,
- 2) Systematic technique or art of medicine, and
- 3) Ethical dimension which involves both a personal moral commitment to the goals of medicine and a philosophical vision of the human person (Seifert, 1).

In light of these exigencies, the work will also examine the Nigerian health care system and the bioethical challenges within the Nigerian context, especially in relation to the question of the eclipse of values. The conclusion will pay attention to the importance of the promotion of values especially in relation to the Nigerian health care system. It calls attention to the significance of practicing medicine with ethical integrity as exemplified in the Hippocratic tradition. The conclusion also asseverates the fact that unethical medicine is not worth practicing, drawing attention to the importance of philosophical *phronesis* in the practice of medicine that is evidence-based, scientifically correct and morally right for the good of the human community, the well-being of persons and human flourishing.

2. The Question of Value Fundamental Elucidations

A lapidary examination of the etymological roots of the English word “value” presents before us the fact that the English word “value” has its origins in the Latin word “valere” which signifies “worth.” The same Latin root “valere” is at the origins of the English word “valor” which signifies strength and vigour, as expressions of useful energy, dynamism and vitality. However, for the sake of clarity, it must be stated also that there are also other Latin word expressions such as “dignus,” “excellencia” which also signify being “worthy,” especially in the context of personality and excellently distinctive mode of life and character. This then offers us a further understanding of the expression “dignitaries” and “distinguished,” indicating the excellent ones who are worthy, who have excellently distinguished themselves, and who can then take on the excellent titles and responsibilities without resentment nor opprobrium from the public that the excellent titles and responsibilities they have appropriated, represent in the manner of speaking, public beguilement and prevarication. From the point of view of the Greeks, the Greek

word for worth was “ἀξία” “axia” from which is derived the expression “axiology” which indicates the systematic study of values.

Ralph Barton Perry presents an interesting notion of value bringing into bear a wide range of opinions expressed by scholars in analysing the broad elasticity of the concept of value.

“It is held at the present day with something approaching unanimity that value in the generic sense has to do with a certain constant that we may call bias or interest. We have found efforts to define value in other terms, and even the argument for its indefinability, points unmistakably to this constant. The justification of this view lies in the fact that bias or interest, with its manifold varieties, conditions and relations affords the best means of systematically describing that region of our world which the value sciences and value vocabulary roughly denote. In any case, it will doubtless appear that most of our differences of opinion will lie within this view. It is broad and elastic enough to contain views so different as the “self-realization” view of Green, Bradley, and their followers, Windelbrand’s “Beurtheilung,” Ricket’s “unmittelbare Gefühl des Sollens,” Westermarck’s “retributive emotions,” Santayana’s “objectified pleasure,” Stuart’s “valuation process,” Meinong’s “Urtheilsgefühl,” Royce’s “loyalty” and countless other conceptions which instruct, edify and divide us.” (Perry, 1914, 149)

In the *General Theory of Value: Its Meaning and Basic Principles Construed in Terms of Interest*, Ralph Barton Perry maintains that any object of interest has value (Perry, 1926, 612). In the *Realms of Value: A Critique of Human Civilization*, Ralph Barton Perry presents multiple realms of value and organization of interests, which include among other things the value of religion, morality, politics, law, economics, science, education and art (Perry, 1954, vii). Prescinding from the realms of value articulated by Perry, it is important to note that life is an intrinsic value, and with life health and health care, without which other realms of value, may collapse into the cataclysm of existential *preterition*. Life itself is an intrinsic value that gives significance to realms of value in human existence. In the analysis of the question of value, it is significant to point out the contribution towards a greater appreciation of the terminology and the influence that emanated from the field of economics. Alfred Marshall stated that economics is the study of humanity in the ordinary business of life. The political economist and philosopher, Adam Smith in his influential work *The Wealth of the Nations*, expressed the importance of value as worth, especially in the economic sense of value as the worth of exchange (Smith, 1). Adam Smith gave an analysis of economics as the science of wealth. Alfred Marshall, maintained that Economics is the study of wealth, but on the more important side, it is the study of man (Marshall, 1). Alfred Marshall brilliantly, turned attention to the significance of persons in the task of economic productivity. The real wealth is people and there is a need to give an analysis of economics in terms of humanity, in the light of human values.

“Political Economy or Economics is the study of mankind in the ordinary business of life. It examines that part of the individual and social activities that are closely related to the attainment of material resources, to welfare and its utilization.” (Marshall, 1)

Persons have an interest in value. In the context of philosophical reflection, greater attention came to be focused on the question of value, especially in the wake of the provocatively revolutionary philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche with his *Willen zur Macht: Umwerthe Alles Werthe, The Will to Power: The Transvaluation of All Values*. Value evokes interest in various dimensions. Values represent what is of interest to persons in various dimensions of life. Value as what is of interest to persons include, life, security, freedom, respect, wisdom, success, kindness and pleasure. The list is merely representative and not intended to be exhaustive. In the view of Shalom Schwartz, basic values could be understood as: *“desirable trans-situational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or other social entity”* (Schwartz, 21). Values as trans-situational goals serve as principles to people in diverse circumstances of life. Values influence and shape personal identity, goals and perceptions. In a very broad perspective value provides a comprehensively overarching framework for examining a variety of questions that are of interest to persons, not only in philosophy but also in other areas of human life, learning and activity.

From the point of view of philosophical analysis, value as evocative of interest takes into consideration all the evaluative dimensions of philosophy, especially in the context of axiological studies. In his analysis of the question of values, William Frankena points towards a list of intrinsic goods which include: life, consciousness, activity, health and strength, pleasure and satisfaction, happiness, beatitude, contentment, truth, knowledge, understanding, wisdom, beauty, harmony, aesthetic experiences, goodness, virtues, mutual affection, love, friendship, cooperation, just distribution of goods and evils, harmony and proportion in one’s own life, power and experience of achievement, self-expression, freedom, peace, security, adventure, novelty, good reputation, honour and personal esteem. The list is not exhaustive and is open to further deliberations (Frankena, 87-88). In the view of G. E. Moore: *“To say that a kind of value is “intrinsic” means merely that the question whether a thing possesses it, and in what degree it possesses it depends solely on the intrinsic nature of the thing in question”* (Moore, 261). There are challenges with regard to the extrinsic and intrinsic dimensions of value as well as the objective and subjective dimensions of value.

Value theories cover a wide range in the intellectual spectrum of philosophical ideas. It is important to acknowledge the contribution of the Austrian philosopher, Franz Clemens Brentano, who built on insights from Aristotle and Aquinas, and as a teacher of philosophy and psychology at the University of Vienna exercised a profound influence on future scholars including Sigmund Freud, Edmund Husserl, and Alexis Meinong, just to mention these few. Brentano in his philosophy of knowledge and psychology laid profound emphasis on intentional objects as the distinctive characteristic of all acts of knowing, feeling and willingness.

Franz Brentano avers that: *“Every act of knowledge is characterized by what the Scholastics call the intentional or mental existence of an object; we call it the relation to an object the direction towards an object; we could also call it immanent objectivity”* (Brentano, 111). The existing object is not necessarily identical with the extramental reality, rather the object owes its existence to some activity carried out by the context of intentionality. This in turn raises significant questions with regard to the nature of the mind and the activities of the mind. Alexius Meinong in his studies in philosophy and psychology was greatly influenced by Franz Brentano. He made significant contributions to the philosophy of the mind, epistemology, anthropology and value theory. Taking the original insight from Brentano, Meinong, re-organized the theory of objects expressed in the theory of intentionality originally postulated by Brentano, into a new philosophical formulation related this reformulated theory to the question of values and made the affirmation that, there is a need for a realm of being in which objects are given, some of such and such objects include moral values. This importantly opens up the question of the existence of values and the question of the nature of values to the question of the metaphysics of objects. In line with this, Meinong formulated his famous theory of objects, the *Gegenstandstheorie* (Meinong, 76).

In his philosophical analysis of the question of values, Hartmann takes into consideration the philosophical challenges inherent in the line of thought offered by what he comprehensively refers to as: *“The Philosophy of German Idealism” Die Philosophie des Deutschen Idealismus*. Hartmann presents a realistic orientation in relation to the question of values and deserves to be taken seriously in relation to the question of axiological studies. In the view of Hartmann, values are essences in the ontic realm, essences understood more precisely much in the same context as ideal forms expressed in the philosophy of Plato. For Hartmann, the world of subsisting values can be intuited through cognitive and affective acts of consciousness. Value has *“as genuine an existence as mathematical law”* (Hartmann, 226).

“The proposition that values are essences has had light thrown upon it from two sides. First, values are a conditioning prius of all phenomena of the moral life, in connection with which the apriority of the valuational consciousness constitutes only one partial phenomenon. And, in the second place, they are absolute, as regards the subject who appraises them. It has been shown that all “relativity to the subject” affects only the structure of the content. But the value of the content is not identical with its structure.” (Hartmann, 217)

Values are neither subjective states of consciousness nor physical existing entities, values in their essence constitute a realm of ideal reality. *“Every kind of ideal Being has some sort of connection with the real...”* (Hartmann, 232), Persons perceive values differently based on their openness to the ideal existence of values. Axiological studies in the light of the philosophy of Hartmann present what could be referred to as a dynamic theory of self-realization, in the intuition of a range of ideal possibilities that ought to be realized existentially.

Wilbur Marshall Urban, could be presented as one of the foremost American philosophers in the field of axiological studies, some of the significant works of Wilbur Urban in this field include: *Valuation. Its Nature and Laws*, 1909, *The Intelligible World of Metaphysics and Value*, 1929, *Fundamentals of Ethics*, 1930, and *Beyond Realism and Idealism*, 1949, just to mention these few. Urban, as expressed in the trajectory of his life and studies, was greatly influenced by the axiological studies set forth by the Austro-Germanic scholars. Urban presents the act of valuation as the feeling aspect of a conative process (Urban, 54). The existential reality of freedom cannot be denied, Urban maintains that moral responsibility is implied in the acceptance of moral freedom. Moral duty ought to be grounded in the axiom that the good must be chosen rather than evil, and the greater good takes precedence over the lesser good.

In our situational context, G. O. Ozumba in his work: *A Course Text on Ethics* borrowing from Archie Bahm lists about six pairs of values, which include: good and bad values, ends and means values, subjective and objective values, apparent and real values, actual and potential values, pure and mixed values (Ozumba, 69). The analysis of the question of values, which it has to be admitted is not exhaustive, but representative, is not set forth as an experiment in pedantics but to point out the complex nature of the question of values. The interest here is not to present a completely new paradigm but to appreciate the expanding knowledge with regard to the question of values and the contributions that scholars have made in that direction and to examine the relevance of values in relation to human health and the health care system.

3. The Question of Health: Preliminary Elucidations

By way of preliminary elucidations, it would be pertinent to state that the concept of health is as interesting as it is complex.

“The concepts of health, illness, and disease play a pivotal role in defining the boundaries of medical concern, professional control, and social obligation. Defining what does or does not constitute a disease determines both the authority and power of those charged with alleviating its consequences as well as the scope of the social obligations of those beset by medical problems.” (Caplan, 57)

The clarification of the question of the meaning of health is a fundamental question for medicine, health care, bioethics and the philosophy of medicine. In his analysis of the bio-statistical concept of health, Christopher Boorse maintains that: *“Health as freedom from disease is then statistical normality of function, i.e., the ability to perform all typical physiological functions with at least typical efficiency”* (Boorse, 542). In its Constitution, the WHO declares that: *“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”* (World Health Organization, 1). The definition of health given by the WHO is complex and multidimensional. It is programmatic in the attention to the positive dimension of health. It serves as a counterpoise to the negative preoccupation with health as *“the absence of disease.”* But there are also challenges that

may point towards the medicalization of almost every dimension of human existential reality.

5. The Nigerian Health Care System: Bioethical Challenges

The health of the citizens is important because of the grandeur of life. Governments have great responsibilities in the advancement of public health, precisely because governments, are bestowed with the constitutional powers to act on behalf of the people. Governments ought to derive their legitimacy from the will of the people in the republic and for the good of the people in the republic. Legislation towards the advancement of public health is important in as much as it strives towards the establishment of the powers and duties of government to prevent injury and disease and promote the population's health, as well as safeguard the rights and responsibilities of the people towards health and the promotion of health. Laws and policies are of great importance in creating conditions for people to lead healthier lives. There are political, economic social and cultural dimensions to the people's health care system. The health of the people calls attention to the powers and duties of the state to ensure conditions in which the citizens can lead a healthy life, helping to identify, prevent, and ameliorate risks to health and safety in the population and promoting an efficient health care delivery system.

"Health care delivery involves numerous organizational units, ranging from hospitals to physicians' practices to units providing single services but none of these reflect the boundaries within which value is truly created. The proper unit for measuring value should encompass all services or activities that jointly determine success in meeting a set of patient needs. These needs are determined by the patient's medical condition, defined as an interrelated set of medical circumstances that are best addressed in an integrated way. The definition of medical condition includes the most common associated conditions – meaning that care for diabetes, for example, must integrate care for conditions such as hypertension, renal disease, and vascular disease and that value should be measured for everything included in that care." (Porter, www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/nejmp1011024)

Health is important not only to individuals but also to the community as a whole. The question of health brings to the fore some persistent issues with regard to the power and responsibilities of state authority, the autonomy of the individual and the promotion of the common good. The benefits of health to each individual are indisputable. Health as a basic human good is necessary for human well-being and flourishing. It is not the only human good for sure, but it is one without which other human goods and even life itself stand in great peril. Health is necessary for much of the joy, creativity and productivity that human persons derive from life. Health is also important for human communities because without minimum levels of health, communities cannot achieve a common social life, participate in the political process, generate wealth and ensure economic prosperity and provide for common defence and security. The health of the people then is important not only for the individual but also for the community because

a fundamental level of human functioning is a prerequisite for engaging in activities which are critical to community existence and development.

“The health care system can be defined as the means by which health care is financed, organized, delivered and reimbursed to a given population. It includes consideration of access (for whom and to what services), expenditures, and resources (health care workers and facilities). The goal of a health-care system is to enhance the health of the population in the most effective manner possible, given a society’s available resources and competing needs.” (Pawlson and Glover, 1041)

In light of the economic difficulties confronting the nation the public health domain has been gravely affected by rising costs and poor services, as well as a shortage of materials and lack of qualified personnel. And most government hospitals have witnessed deterioration, at a very rapid pace. As the government health care services have been deteriorating the private sector continues to expand. Most of the public elites do not patronize the public hospitals. There are serious challenges with regard to the health care services that are being offered to the Nigerian public.

“Most of the deaths and serious illnesses occurring among Nigerians are due to conditions that are easily preventable or can be treated with simple remedies. Communicable diseases, especially those associated with inadequate environmental sanitation and poor personal hygiene, predominate and are often compounded by malnutrition. Lack of timely and appropriate care often increases the risk. The current high rates of morbidity and mortality could be substantially reduced by a more rational application of available resources even at this time of financial stringency.” (Ransome-Kuti, 3).

There is no gainsaying the fact that from every indication the current state of the health care system in Nigeria is deplorable. Action is the best interpreter of behaviour. A clear indication of the deplorable state of the health care system could be seen in the fact that the political elites, elected to serve the people most often seek health care services outside Nigeria, in foreign countries. The challenges emerging from diseases such as malaria, guinea worm, pneumonia, measles, gonorrhoea, schistosomiasis, typhoid, tuberculosis, chicken-pox, diarrhoea, HIV/AIDS, and Ebola, just to mention a few are serious. There are also challenges emerging from situations of wrong diagnoses, poor services and negligence in the context of medical practice and health care continue to increase in the country contributing greatly to the cataclysmic expansion of the culture of death and the eclipse of values.

“The Nigerian health care system is poorly developed. No adequate and functional surveillance systems are developed. To achieve success in health care in this modern era, a system well-grounded in routine surveillance and military intelligence as the backbone of the health sector is necessary, besides adequate management coupled with strong leadership principles.” (Welcome, doi: 10.4103/0975-7406.90100)

The crises inherent in the direful situation demand attention and call for the transformation of the decrepit structures of decay, the envisioning of a new reality based on authentic values and the reconstruction of an efficient health care system that is capable of serving the health care needs of the citizens.

6. Concluding Perspectives

Human health is important. The health care system in the country is in a direful situation. There is a need for transformation based on values. In the Aphorisms, Hippocrates indicated: *“Vita brevis, ars longa, occasio praeceps experientia fallax, judicium difficile”* (Hippocrates, 1). As stated by Hippocrates techniques, arts and skills require time, but life is short, experience defective, opportunities fleeting and judgment difficult. The physician and those who are with the physician have the responsibility to be dedicated to doing what is right, preferring in the valutational process the good over evil and the greater good over the lesser good, the common good over personal preferences. The commitment to doing what is right and good must be at the centre of the concerns of medicine and health care. In this regard, *“as the most humane of sciences, medicine is an excellent focus for problems of sociology, economics, political science, law, and every other discipline which concerns itself with human beings”* (Pellegrino, 1979, 33). *“the entire medical enterprise – theoretical and clinical research as well as actual medical practice has human health as its ultimate end”* (Nordenfelt and Lindahl, xiii).

“The physician performs a “right and good action” on behalf of the patient. The action is right if it is scientifically correct and medically valid. It is good only if it meets the needs of the patient in that particular circumstance according to the patient’s values. Therefore, a good action by the physician is a moral action aimed at restoring health to the patient...This beneficence model makes up for the deficiencies of both autonomy and paternalism. It acknowledges the fact that patients, in their state of illness and lack of knowledge, are necessarily less than fully autonomous. It avoids paternalism by insisting on beneficence-in-trust.” (Donovan, 19)

The word alphabet, in its etymological origins, is rooted in Greek culture. And the word philosophy is also Greek in the light of the etymological origins. The philosophical love of wisdom as expressed in the rich foundation of significant principles, ideas and core values, including moderation, liberty, democracy, integrity, truth, knowledge, beauty, and *phronesis*, has contributed greatly to cultural refinement and flourishing. The existential challenge expressed in the need to overcome the forces of superstition, to promote the use of reason in the interpretation of the physical laws of the cosmos, and to appreciate the place of intellectual and moral virtues in human affairs, has contributed immensely to human development and civilization. The insight flowing from philosophy, in the modest appreciation of the love of wisdom has contributed to the development of human knowledge in various fields. The dynamic interaction and at times strenuous relationship between science and philosophy especially in the field of

medicine and health care has contributed immensely to the development of what today could be called evidence-based medical practice. The development of the field of philosophy and the implementation of its principles in human life contributed immensely to human well-being and flourishing. The relationship between medicine and philosophy has contributed tremendously to the good of philosophy and the good of medicine as well as to human wellbeing and development. Hippocratic tradition as well as the Oath of Hippocrates, which is an integral part of that tradition contributed enormously in establishing the ethical framework for the practice of medicine and promoted the relationship between moral values, medical practice and health care. Unethical medicine is not worth practicing. Evidence-based medicine ought to be grounded in the interface between the wisdom of philosophy and the data of scientific research. In the context of medical practice and health care, to practice medicine with integrity is a moral decision, a decision that should be rooted in the grandeur of wisdom, truth and knowledge. Philosophical *phronesis* encourages human persons to act in accordance with right reason, because the eclipse of reason points to the eclipse of the core of that which is fundamentally human. The human person is a rational being. As rational beings, human persons have an interest in values, in a very fundamental way, the eclipse of reason also points to the eclipse of values.

“If there is such a thing as an awakening of the consciousness of value, it is our time that has need of it. How far is it possible, no one can estimate. It can hardly emanate from philosophy. For all that, however, this is a field for philosophy to explore. There are prejudices which only it can uproot. And there are emotional obstacles which reflection and the turning of an eye of the soul can meet...We live from sensation to sensation. And our penetration becomes shallow, our sense of value is blunted by snatching at the sensational.”
(Hartmann, 44)

The above quotation from Nicolai Hartmann reflects the importance of the question of values, especially in moments of existential crises and intellectual upheavals. It also points to the role of philosophy in the task of the exploration of the question of values. The English word crisis has its origin in the Greek terminology “κρῖσις” which implies judgement, the critical moment for decision, discernment and predilection towards good or evil. The health care system in the country is going through a period of crisis. Moments of crises are also moments of opportunities for transformation because even in the context of crisis there are opportunities. A good example is the fact that the WHO, the World Health Organization, came into existence as one of the earliest organs of the UNO, United Nations Organization in the light of the aftermath, of the existential crisis of the cataclysm of the Second World War. This points to the fact that, in human existence, in moments of crises, if the judgment is made in the direction of the promotion of values, it could signal a turning point for the promotion of the good. This also points to the question of the relationship between the good and values. There are diverse challenges in relation to health and the health care system, especially in the Nigerian context. The task of recovery and restoration would demand efficient and systematic

attention to the significance of values in human life and in society. Values are important and because values are important, the promotion of significant values in health and health care, would demand attention to the dignity of the human person, the integrity of human life, freedom, responsibility, beneficence, truth, knowledge, peace, security, justice and prudence, all these would contribute greatly towards the enhancement of human health and health care, the good of human persons, human wellbeing and flourishing.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

About the Author

The author graduated *Summa Cum Laude Probatas* in Philosophy from the Pontifical Urban University, Rome. He has a Licentiate in Sacred Theology from the Accademia Alfonsiana, Lateran University, Rome, He has a Doctorate in Sacred Theology with Specialization in Moral Theology from the Accademia Alfonsiana, Lateran University, Rome. He also has a PhD in Bioethics from the Catholic University of Sacred Heart, Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, Agostino Gemelli, Rome. Currently, the author is an Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy, University of Uyo, Nigeria. His area of interests include: Value Philosophy, Bioethics, Metaphysics, Anthropology, Philosophy of Medicine, Philosophy of Culture, Philosophy of Science and Technology.

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