

The Philosophy of Pain

Abstract

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Though there are many differences in cultures, traditions, philosophy, and religion, pain is present in some capacity for every human on earth. There are many different ways to think about what pain is, as well as the role it plays and the approaches to treating it. Though the historical understanding is varied, pain is understood today to be some combination of sensory perception and experiential processing through a biopsychosocial model. This paper examines the history of pain from primary sources and considers different perspectives on pain in order to provide insight to how to best approach it today. By diving into different religious and cultural understandings of pain, it seeks to offer a broader perspective on how healthcare professionals can understand pain and how individuals can conceptualize pain. Additionally, it is vital in the healthcare setting to acknowledge that the culture of patients and the culture of providers influence pain care. This study seeks to draw on previous work in done the pain realm, and provide a starting point for more extensive research into understanding pain in many different contexts, including gender, religion, culture, and philosophy. Ultimately, pain is an incredibly complex entity, and must be addressed through many different avenues and perspectives.