

RESUMO - BIOÉTICA

THE MEDICALIZATION OF THE HUMAN CONDITION: ETHICAL, EXISTENCIAL AND SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS

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INTRODUCTION: The expansion of modern medicine has progressively extended its scope beyond disease, redefining fundamental aspects of the human condition—such as suffering, aging, and emotional distress—as medical problems. This process, known as medicalization, reflects a shift in which normal human experiences are increasingly interpreted through biomedical frameworks. Recent literature highlights that such expansion may obscure the existential and spiritual dimensions of human life, reducing vulnerability and finitude to clinical entities. **OBJECTIVES:** To analyze the medicalization of the human condition and its ethical, existential, and spiritual implications, emphasizing its impact on contemporary bioethical discourse. **METHODS:** A systematic review was conducted using PubMed and related databases, focusing on publications from 2020–2025. Keywords included “medicalization,” “bioethics,” and “spirituality.” Inclusion criteria comprised peer-reviewed articles addressing conceptual, ethical, or interdisciplinary perspectives. Studies were selected based on relevance, recency, and contribution to theoretical and clinical understanding.

RESULTS: Recent evidence demonstrates that medicalization extends into emotional life and social experience, often promoting pharmacological or technical responses to inherently human conditions. This shift is associated with increased dependence on medical systems and potential erosion of personal autonomy. Simultaneously, emerging research emphasizes spirituality as a neglected yet essential dimension of health, linked to meaning, resilience, and well-being. The integration of spirituality into bioethics has gained relevance, with studies indicating its importance in both patient care and ethical reflection. Contemporary discussions also reveal tension between biomedical reductionism and broader anthropological perspectives that recognize the human being as inherently vulnerable, relational, and transcendent. **CONCLUSION:** The medicalization of the human condition, while advancing clinical care, risks narrowing the understanding of human existence to biological parameters. A comprehensive bioethical framework must therefore integrate existential and spiritual dimensions, preserving human dignity and meaning beyond disease. Rebalancing medicine requires not less science, but a deeper recognition of the human person as more than a clinical subject.

Palavras-chave: “medicalization;” “bioethics;” and “spirituality”.