

Philosophy 3330 Spring 2021
Reading questions #12
Due Tue, April 13

Read Chapter 6 of Jacob Stegenga's *Care and Cure: An Introduction to Philosophy of Medicine* and then answer the following questions. Your answers should be uploaded in Blackboard.

1) Is an allergy a disease? Some allergies can be life-threatening while others are very minor inconveniences if at all. Does the severity matter? Say you have a mild irritation in your mouth when you eat strawberries and decide that you don't really like them so you hardly ever eat them. As it turns out, you are having a mild allergic reaction and never realized it. Do you have a disease? Why or why not?

2) Are there important distinctions between 'disease', 'disorder', and just 'difference' (or maybe 'normal variation')? Many people believe that the word 'disease' is highly value laden in the sense that a disease is something that is harmful, needs to be addressed, should be cured, etc. A disorder is typically the name for some kind of impaired function where the cause is not necessarily known (usually a disease has a specific, known cause. So you could have a known autoimmune disorder but until you have a diagnosis, you don't know which autoimmune disease you have). Homosexuality was classified as a disease until 1973 and gender identity disorder was renamed 'gender dysphoria' in 2013 partly due to the stigma attached to the word 'disorder' (but it is still listed in the DSM). Currently, various advocacy groups are hoping to rename (or reclassify) 'autism spectrum disorder' and various intersex conditions collectively called 'disorders of sex development'. How should we decide if something is a disorder or merely variation such as being left handed or red haired? Is this a moral question about values? Or a question about physiological functioning? Or what?

3) After reading the chapter, try to come up with a question that you want answered or a topic that you would like to be discussed further. This could be something that the chapter forced you think about or it could be something that you thought was particularly confusing in the chapter.