ORAL PRESENTATION

On suicide – an integrative model of Stoicism and Scholasticism

Gustavo Santos¹,²

¹Hospital de Magalhães Lemos, Porto, Portugal
²University of Porto, Porto, Portugal
Correspondence: gustavomiguel_88@hotmail.com

Introduction: Traditionally considered under the medical model, in psychiatry, the suicide remains a philosophical problem of laborious and complex approach.

Objectives and Methods: We confronted the philosophic perspective of suicide in two antagonistic times, the Ancient Age and the Middle Ages, analyzing the following works: Phaedo (Plato, 428 BC - 348 BC), Epistulae morales ad Lucilium (Seneca, 4 BC – 65 AD), The City of God (Saint Augustine, 354-430), The Summa Theologiae (Thomas Aquinas, 1225-1274) and Del Homicidio (Francisco de Vitoria, 1492-1546).

Results and Discussion: We argued that the demand of a worthy life with virtue, which for Stoics had the maximum moral value, was progressively replaced, during the Middle Ages, by the acceptance of suffering and misery of everyday life. The authors of the Ancient Age conceded a philosophical suicide, under particular conditions, while the Scholastic authors rejected suicide under any circumstances. The Stoic ethical paradigm “When is possible and desirable for a man to commit suicide?” was overridden by the Scholastic moral prohibition “Why the man should not commit suicide?”. We demonstrated how the theological standard overlapped the man’s ethical disposition, during the Middle Ages.

Conclusions: Finally, we propose an integrative model of these paradigms, which we believe may contribute to highlight the philosophical and medical discussion on suicide.