

“An emblematic ardour for Knowledge- Abu Nasr Al- Farabi”

One of the world's most famous philosophers in history was Al-Farabi. He made many discoveries, which not only helped in the field of science but also mathematics, cosmology, political philosophy, metaphysics, ethics and logic.

Al-Farabi's Contributions towards

- Education
- Ethics
- Medicine

He is known for his writing of “Social psychology & Principles of Opinions of citizens of Virtuous city”

(I) Education

Social Psychology:

“May be defined as the scientific study of people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviour being influenced by actual, imagined or implied presence of others.”

In medical practice to date, in medical colleges, students are enlightened with its importance through practical classes. For example in third year, students taught how to take “History” of a patient, while taking into consideration:

- ❖ *The pain and suffering the patient is feeling, keeping in mind the possible psychological fluctuations in his/her behavioural and mood shifts.*
- ❖ *“The response you get from your patient depends on the degree you have stimulated the patient's psychology whether positive or negative.”*

Different factors lead us to act in a given way in the company of the patient and look at the conditions, in which definite actions and feelings occur. e.g.

- ✚ Which questions are to be asked
- ✚ The appropriate manner/ way they should be asked in order not to offend the patient
- ✚ How to captivate the attention of the patient
- ✚ Let him/her to open up about presenting illness without hesitation
- ✚ Let the patient steer the conversation, avoiding leading questions
- ✚ Treat the patient rationally while avoiding jargon.

“An isolated individual could not achieve all the perfections by himself, without the aid of other individuals.”- Al-Farabi

Further, medical students are taught in small groups/batches, to improve their abilities of communication, knowledge sharing, mending psychological behaviour towards others and to implement, their individual qualities at peak, e.g. Practical labs for experiments, tutorials, DH batches to study anatomy (dissection, models etc.) in 1st and 2nd year MBBS and ward batches from 3rd year MBBS.

“Achieve what he can of that perfection, every man needs to stay in the neighbourhood of others and associate with them”- Al-Farabi

(II) Ethics:

“Is systematizing, protecting and endorsing notions of right and wrong”.

With 7 Ethical writings, Al-Farabi, expresses “ethics” through practical philosophy as both a “theoretical & practical discipline”.

He emphasized the need to achieve “true joy”, by eliminating the evils of moral habits of the people of a society. Al-Farabi showed the importance of obtaining the “TRUTH” and its presentation to the people. He clarified the falsehood that crept by dividing the “wrong” into different categories of the society i.e.,

- Ignorant society
- Wicked society
- Errant society

He claimed these aimed at *low aspirations* such as gaining riches, power, lavish pleasures, which undermined the “real” meaning of life “*philanthropy*”. The people of these societies failed to tend to the needs of the ill, poor, weak, destitute and helpless.

According to his teachings, medical ethics taught in the curriculum as “Behavioural sciences” helps to understand and apply the value of judgemental practice of medicine along with its application in clinical settings. Med students are taught these values.

Values:

- **Autonomy-** *The patient has the authority to accept or reject treatment.*
- **Non-baneful-** *There should be no harm or danger/threat.*
- **Justice-** *Should always be implemented.*
- **Beneficence-** *The doctor/practitioner should do what’s best for the patient.*

Behavioural Sciences:

“It involves uses principles of psychology, sociology and anthropology in conditions regarding disease and health. The parts of family, gender, social classes, employment, and socioeconomic circumstances help in controlling and sustaining health and disease so it can be measured.”

Today med students are taught to implement such as **NPIs- Clinical practice Non-pharmacological Interventions** that includes:

(A) Communication Skills-

Practitioner should be gentle, compassionate and caring in order to understand the presenting complaint of the patient.

🌿 **Attending & Listening-** "Strictly concentrating" mindfully.

🌿 **Active listening-** Stress should be given to patients':

i) Paralinguistic aspect

ii) Body Language

🌿 **Verbal techniques-**

i) Questions- Questions asked from the patient which maybe:

a) Closed - To draw a "Yes" or "NO" reply from the patient.

b) Opened – These are questions, which do not produce a particular answer.

c) Leading- These questions are avoided because they may confuse the patient, resulting in misinterpretation.

ii) Funnelling- Guiding questions in order obtain a more definite answer.

iii) Paraphrasing- Recapitulation of patients' presenting complaint.

iv) Selective reflective- Highlighting the patients' feelings relating it to the symptoms and problem presented by patient.

v) Empathy building- A statement is given by examiner to review what the patient is "actually experiencing/feeling" to comprehend it better.

vi) Summary- Statements of the patient gets compressed and converted into scientific terminology.

(B) Counselling-

It is refining the affiliation between the counsellor, patient and his/her family member, colleague etc.

This helps in different circumstance for e.g. telling bad news, like a positive malignancy to a biopsy report.

(C) Informational Care(IC)-

It has 3Ds: Disease, Drug, and Doctor.

It deals with the amount of information provided to the patient and its:

i) Timing

ii) Language

iii) Situation

It's provided according to the needs, phase of illness and healing of the patient.

(III) Science and Medicine-

Al-Farabi researched on "vacuum" he wrote a treatise, regarding its existence. He performed experiments using handheld plungers under water.

Ultimately, concluding,

- ◆ ***"airs volume can expand to fill available space"***and
- ◆ ***Perfect vacuum existence concept is still unclear.***

He is known to have contributed in the fields of "**Metaphysics and Cosmology**" stating

- The universe is made up a number of concentric circles
- The outermost first being heaven
- Then there are stars, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury and finally the moon.
- At the centre, there is a material world.

Today different med techniques utilize vacuum in treatments for e.g.

■ **VAC- Vacuum assisted Closure**-is used for treating acute and chronic wounds. It removes oedema fluid via suction healing both 1st and 2nd degree wounds.

■ **Vacuum Aspiration-**

- i) Used in therapeutic measures after miscarriage.
- ii) Obtaining samples after endometrial biopsy etc.

Today, if we reflect back on all of these contributions, we've acknowledged that they've continued to effect medical practice.

By: Azka Aisha
(N-63) 3rd Year MBBS
Nishtar Medical College (NMC)
Multan.

