

Epistemological considerations about medicine and mental health in ancient Greece

Consideraciones epistemológicas sobre la medicina y las enfermedades mentales en la antigua Grecia

Ivanovic-Zuvic, Fernando

It has been suggested that occidental medicine has its origins in ancient Greek medicine. During this period a mythical paradigm to medicine was replaced by a medical practice based on the epistemological principles of pre Socratic philosophers and later by the works of Hippocrates. The Corpus Hipocraticum contains the majority of the medical specialties as we know them today and represents a new perspective of the relationship of man and nature. Nature represents the basis for understanding human reasoning. Starting from their myths, the Greeks developed a practical body of knowledge about man in health and in sickness, based on their observations of nature. Medical practice was considered not only a technical profession, but also an art, based on wisdom. Mental diseases were also part of the effect of nature on mankind and should be treated just as other diseases of the body. © 2006 Sociedad de Neurología, Psiquiatría y Neurocirugía.