

PHENOMENOLOGY AND HOW TO TRANSLATE IT TO TREATMENT

J.-M. Azorin

Psychiatry, Hopital Sainte Marguerite, Marseille, France

Phenomenology is a multifaceted concept. However it was introduced in Psychiatry by Jaspers as an equivalent of subjective psychopathology, which was an attempt to put order in the experiences reported by psychiatric patients. Since Jaspers, and whatever the matter phenomenology is referring to, one of its most common function is probably to pinpoint the importance of paying attention to patient subjectivity in psychiatric experience. The validity of this approach is not questionable in semiology, nosography, and classification; it helps understand, differentiate and separate clinical data. The psychotherapeutic process is probably the most exemplar illustration of the role played by patient subjectivity in psychiatric experience, and more particularly in psychiatric treatment. However, it could be argued that this role, far from being restricted to the psychotherapeutic area (or some psychotherapeutic methods), is at the forefront in every therapeutic domain, including pharmacotherapy. Of course subjectivity is at stake in patient preference, adherence, and consent but also, more deeply, at the root of what we call « drug response » and the likelihood of healing it may open. We will try to show how attention to patient subjectivity can enlight what « verum » response and « placebo » response may have in common, and how the opposition between « efficacy » and « effectiveness » is likely to be related to it. This paves the way to a critique of current pharmacotherapy concepts, and the unique source of “evidence” on which guidelines and recommendations are based.