

## **PROCEDURAL SUFFERING: THE ULTIMATE EDGE OF MEDICINE?**

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**Background:** The concept of procedural pain which was initially associated with treatment provided at pediatric/neonatal intensive care units, has been commonly applied in medicine to describe pain caused by diagnostic, surgical, nursing and physiotherapy procedures. The key component of this concept is that pain is intrinsically joined with therapy and, as such, it is eventually, despite all the efforts to avoid it, an inevitable part of medicine. In this article, analogously to the concept of procedural pain, the idea of procedural suffering is created and refined.

**Method:** Max Scheler's phenomenological method is used to define the concept of suffering and, in particular, to differentiate it from the idea of experiencing/enduring pain. Then the moral rules related to the concept of procedural suffering are justified using the methods proper to the life's programs approach to bioethics (positive/negative hermeneutics).

**Results:** It is demonstrated that the procedural suffering is intrinsically joined with the practice of medicine and the intensity of its experience, analogously to the experience of procedural pain, seems to be positively correlated with the advances in medical practice. Both procedural pain and procedural suffering are, though not intended but foreseen and tolerated effects of medical treatment. Doctors responsibility of their unintended but permitted actions is discussed in the conclusions.