



# The Dangers of Doctor Bot

*Why health-care professionals must resist the temptation to defer to AI*

**Ronald W. Dworkin**

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Ronald W. Dworkin encourages doctors to look at AI “as just another book on the shelf.” As employers across industries push their employees to integrate AI in the workplace, is it possible to treat AI as just another resource, silent until you pull it off the bookshelf? How can doctors and other professionals use AI, if at all, without allowing it to supersede their own judgment? Should they?
2. According to Dworkin, religion, more than other disciplines, “recognizes humanity’s inherent defects, which include people’s tendency to trust what should not be trusted.” What are humanity’s “inherent defects,” and how does religion recognize them? Why is this particularly prominent in religious settings compared to other disciplines?
3. “To boost a patient’s spirit...doctors must sometimes stretch the truth a bit,” Dworkin writes. AI, on the other hand, “cannot practice this fine art of lying to patients.” Should health-care providers offer false promises or small lies to patients? Is this a good reason to keep AI out of the doctor’s office? What other human qualities in medical practice improve the patient experience?
4. While calling for increased reflection on the “uniqueness of our shared human dignity” in June 2025, Pope Leo XIV also acknowledged that AI “has opened new horizons” by “enhancing research in healthcare and scientific discovery.” Is it possible to appreciate our unique human dignity while using AI tools in health-care settings? Does AI’s potential to foster medical advancements outweigh the concerns in Dworkin’s article?
5. Americans complain that many doctors are often cold or too scientific. In your own experiences with health-care providers, how important is bedside manner and “the common touch”? Are there any advantages of receiving straightforward, albeit unsympathetic, medical information? How would you feel discussing your medical care with an AI chatbot or similar tool?
6. In discussing *Antiqua et nova*, Dworkin posits that the greatest threat lies not in AI itself, but in ourselves. What does he mean by this? Is his argument concordant with the Church’s concerns about AI as articulated in *Antiqua et nova*?

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

Nolen Gertz, “More than Machines?,” September 2023: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/jacques-ellul-gertz-artificial-intelligence-AI-WGA-technology>

Paul Lauritzen, “End-of-Life Dreams,” April 2023: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/end-life-dreams>

Regina Munch, “AI & Personhood,” January 2024: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/ai-personhood>

Alexander Stern, “Captive Users,” August 15, 2024: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/captive-users>

Isaac Holeman, “An Antidote to Despair,” May 2022: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/antidote-despair>