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To date, there has been very little discussion of diagnosis in the general philosophy of medicine literature. This is a significant gap, given the fact that diagnosis is arguably the cornerstone as well as the starting point of modern medicine. That is, in general, before the treatment or prognostic evaluation of a patient can even begin, there must be a diagnosis – and preferably an accurate one.

Thus the aim of this paper is to use philosophical methods as well as case analysis to address three specific – and as yet unanswered – questions concerning current medical diagnostic practice.

These questions are:

- 1) whether there is a logic of diagnosis, and if so whether this logic is generalizable (and thus teachable)
- 2) how diagnostic tests and procedures should be evaluated and implemented and
- 3) how ethical considerations affect diagnostic practice.

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