

# Ethics After Hours



## Diagnosis (episode 1) Documentary

---

### Summary<sup>1</sup>

In this first episode of the Netflix documentary series *Diagnosis*, based on a column by Dr. Lisa Sanders in the *New York Times*, we meet 23 year old Angel. Angel suffers from severe pain and sometimes can't move. Angel has been ill for 9 years, but is still without a diagnosis. Desperate to find out what is wrong with her, she seeks Dr. Sanders' help. Dr. Sanders writes about Angel's symptoms in one of her articles, hoping that readers' collective knowledge and experience may give some clues as to what is wrong with Angel and possibly even lead to a diagnosis.

Duration: 49 minutes

Cast: Lisa Sanders.

Released: August 16, 2019

Available on Netflix (Original Netflix Production)

### Questions for discussion:

- Why do you think getting a diagnosis is so important for patients?
- What do you think of using the internet and social media to find a diagnosis?
  - Do you think this approach to finding diagnosis for rare diseases should be more widely used or kept to a minimum?
  - If you were in Angel's place would you have any concerns with this approach? Why/why not?
  - Are there any ethical concerns raised by writing about patients such as Angel in the national media?
- Why do you think Angel's father reacted as he did when she suggested that he might be a carrier of a genetic disease?
- Discuss what getting a diagnosis means for Angel's ability to live the life she has always dreamt of.<sup>2</sup>
- Do you think that the fact that Angel lives in a country with a primarily private health care system is relevant to her experience of trying to obtain a diagnosis? Why/why not?
  - What are some of the obstacles that a patient like Angel might face in a primarily public health care system with no or very limited out-of-pocket payment?

---

<sup>1</sup> This summary is adapted from Netflix's webpage.

<sup>2</sup> Read what Dr. Sanders thought about the Netflix documentary and her concerns here: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/16/reader-center/diagnosis-tv-netflix.html>