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Could robotic nurses really care?

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The science and technologies of artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics currently are presenting life-like machines that are claimed to furnish companionship in the nursing care of older people. However, critics of the claim have objected that such robots are inauthentic companions, substituting mere mimicry of human behavior for the real presence of conscious caring provided by human nurses. Viewing the robots as deceptive in this fashion has prompted additional complaints concerning psychological, moral and spiritual implications for people who interact with the machines. On the other hand, various cultural factors tend to support either setting aside or denying these criticisms. In today's presentation we shall argue that there are some strong philosophical and scientific reasons for supporting the critics, although future development of a particular AI architecture might introduce an intriguing possibility of robotic nurses that really could care for their patients. In either case, the growing prospect of robotic nurses clearly merits attention in the geriatric healthcare community.

Biography

Theodore Albert Metzler holds BA degree in Mathematics, an MS in Computer Science and MA and PhD degree in Philosophy. Although most of his work experience in computer application software development has involved artificial intelligence, he responded to a personal calling in recent years, earning an additional MA in Theology and a Certificate in Science and Religion. At Oklahoma City University, he has served as the Director of the Darrell W. Hughes Program for Religion and Science Dialogue, Executive Director of the Oklahoma Interfaith Power and Light program and Visiting Assistant Professor in the Kramer School of Nursing, USA.

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