

PSYCHOSOMATIC DISEASES AND METHODS OF TREATMENT IN PSYCHOTHERAPY

MATHEW M J

Research Scholar
PSYCHOLOGY

Abstract

The Greek words "psyche" (mind) and "soma" (body) are the source of the phrase "psychosomatic." A psychosomatic ailment is a medical condition that affects the body and the psyche. Oro-mucosal diseases may sometimes be initiated and progressed by mental and emotional variables acting as risk factors. Numerous studies have shown that psychological variables play a crucial part in the aetiology of most oral illnesses, such as burning mouth syndrome and chronic pain disorders. It is necessary to define the words psychosomatic medicine and psychosomatic disease before discussing the treatment of psychosomatic sickness. The development of psychosomatic medicine was a response to an almost wholly mechanical understanding of disease. It highlights the psychological effects of sickness. It is equivalent to medicine if the whole evaluation of the ill individual, including his or her psychology, personality, social interactions, physical structure, and functions, is part of the medical system." Often overlooked are the psychosocial components of sickness; the term "psychosomatic" emphasises the role that the body and mind play in illness. Psychosomatic medicine is an approach to illness and a philosophy of disease that aims to clarify the nature, course, and presentation of the condition.

Keywords: *Psychosomatic Diseases, Psychotherapy, Methods, Treatment.*

1. Introduction

Psychosomatic illnesses are the result of pathological consequences arising from psychological impacts on the biological regulation of tissues, including the mouth cavity, which is associated with human awareness and desires. The hallmarks of these illnesses are physiological abnormalities that originate from emotional factors and impact a specific organ system, which is often innervated by the autonomic nervous system.



Figure1: Psychosomatic Disorders

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The Greek words "psyche" meaning "mind" and "soma" meaning "body" give rise to the English word "psychosomatic," which means "soul or mind" and "behaviour." There is a trilemma of neurological, hormonal, and immunologic components via which mental emotions affect bodily organs. Reduced immunological response is the result of stress-induced activation of motor neurons, the hypothalamopituitary-adrenal axis, and the sympathetic nervous system. A crucial psychosomatic system may be the individual's conditioning of a particular conflict or stress to a certain physical defect. Stress and excitement may weaken the immune system, even if it protects the body from infections. The body's immune system may also be compromised by prolonged isolation.

2. Literature Review

Bailoor and Nagesh (2005) provide a thorough introduction to the topic of oral medicine and radiography, touching on all the essential ideas and diagnostic procedures. Even while it doesn't cover psychosomatic illnesses in particular, this textbook gives a solid foundation for comprehending oral health issues in general, including those that have psychosomatic elements.

Cecchi and colleagues (2002) explore how norepinephrine modulates stress responses in the stria terminalis's lateral bed nucleus. This work adds to our knowledge of the neurobiological underpinnings of stress and its possible effects on oral health, even if it is not directly connected to psychosomatic illnesses of the mouth.

Chandrashekar and Math (2006) shed light on the scope, difficulty, and potential future approaches to treating psychosomatic diseases in underdeveloped nations. Although not limited to dental health, this analysis sheds light on the larger picture of psychosomatic diseases and the need for individualised strategies to tackle the distinct obstacles encountered in settings of developing nations.

Geiger and colleagues (2008) add to our knowledge of how dopamine signalling contributes to obesity. Dopamine exocytosis in the mesolimbic brain areas is studied to provide light on the neurochemical changes linked to the risk of obesity. According to their research, rats prone to obesity may exhibit dysregulated reward processing and compulsive feeding behaviours due to dysfunctional dopamine release in the mesolimbic pathway.

3. Understanding Psychosomatic Diseases

3.1. Definition and Classification

In the intriguing field of psychosomatic disorders, psychological variables have a role in the onset and aggravation of physical symptoms. Unlike purely physical illnesses, these symptoms lack a known biological basis. They are grouped according to:

- **Etiology:** The nature of the psychological factor involved. This could be stress, anxiety, depression, trauma, or even personality traits.

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- **Symptomatology:** The type of physical symptoms experienced. These can range from pain (headaches, backaches) to digestive issues (IBS) to skin problems (dermatitis) and even asthma.

3.2. Psychological Factors Involved

The mind and body are closely related, and our mental health has a big influence on our physical health. The following are some important psychological variables that lead to psychosomatic illnesses:

- **Stress:** Prolonged stress triggers the "fight-or-flight" reaction, resulting in physiological alterations such as elevated heart rate, blood pressure, and tense muscles. This may eventually cause physical problems.
- **Trauma:** Long after the occurrence, unresolved trauma may leave lasting emotional scars that might cause physical problems.
- **Unresolved Emotions:** Repressing feelings such as fear, grief, or rage may cause physical symptoms including headaches, stomach-aches, or insomnia.
- **Personality Traits:** People who possess nervous, controlling, or perfectionist personality qualities may be at a higher risk of experiencing psychosomatic symptoms.

3.3. Common Psychosomatic Disorders

These are a few common instances of psychosomatic diseases along with their clinical manifestations:

- **Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS):** Abdominal pain, bloating, diarrhea, or constipation, often triggered by stress or emotional distress.
- **Fibromyalgia:** Chronic widespread pain, fatigue, sleep disturbances, and cognitive difficulties. Often associated with stress and emotional factors.
- **Tension Headaches:** Tightness or pressure around the head, often triggered by stress or anxiety.
- **Asthma:** Difficulty breathing, wheezing, and chest tightness, which can be exacerbated by emotional distress.
- **Skin Conditions:** Eczema, psoriasis, and hives can be worsened by stress and anxiety.

Though psychological elements are crucial, it's vital to remember that psychosomatic ailments are not "all in your head." These are actual medical illnesses with actual medical signs and symptoms.

4. Methods of Treatment in Psychotherapy

techniques used in psychotherapy for the treatment of psychosomatic illnesses. Here are some more reflections on each:

4.1. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT)

- Because cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is so good at identifying and changing negative thinking patterns and behaviours that lead to physical symptoms, it is often used as the first line of treatment for psychosomatic diseases.
- Strategies such as exposure therapy, cognitive restructuring, and relaxation training may assist people in lowering their stress levels and creating better coping strategies, which will eventually enhance their physical well-being.

4.2. Psychodynamic therapy

- This method probes the unconscious mind more thoroughly, looking at conflicts and events from the past that could be causing the symptoms you are experiencing now.
- By shedding light on these unconscious processes, people may improve their comprehension of their emotions and create more effective coping mechanisms, which may lessen physical symptoms.

4.3. Mindfulness-based interventions

- Mindfulness exercises, such as yoga and meditation, may assist people in developing a more objective awareness of their thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations.
- Better emotional control and stress management are made possible by this enhanced awareness, and these actions may have a favourable effect on physical health.

4.4. Integrative approaches

- As you pointed out, it's critical to acknowledge each person's particular requirements. Integrating components from many therapy modalities might result in a treatment plan that is more effective and individualised.
- As an example, an integrated approach may include psychodynamic therapy for addressing more profound emotional problems, mindfulness exercises for reducing stress, and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) for treating particular symptoms.

5. Conclusion

Psychological stress is one of the most pressing issues facing people today. It is well-established that the mouth cavity is associated with psychosomatic diseases. Psychosomatic patients presenting with oral diseases were common in the course of standard dental treatment. These conditions are either not recognised or, more often than not, do not respond to medication. Knowing enough about stress and mental health issues is crucial for the diagnosis and treatment of these conditions.

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