Operational Psychodynamic Diagnosis (OPD)
Diagnostic manuals presently dominate the mental and psychosomatic diagnostic procedure. The most important of these manuals are the ICD-10 and the DSM-III/IV. As a consequence of this development, psychodynamically orientated aspects have been abandoned in favour of phenomenologically orientated operationalizations. In this context, the reliable diagnostic statements were preferred vis-à-vis validity aspects. This book is based on a new psychodynamically orientated approach in the form of a multi-axial system. A study group of 30 German diagnostic experts, working at various German university departments of psychosomatics and psychotherapy, have conducted 3 years of intensive research using this approach. The speaker of this group, founded in 1992, is Dr. Sven Olaf Hoffmann, Chairman and Director, Department of Psychosomatics and Psychotherapy, University of Mainz, Germany. The study group aimed to mediate between exclusively descriptive systems and psychodynamically orientated diagnosis. This diagnostic system is structured on the axes ‘Experience of disease’ (1), ‘Relationship’ (2), ‘Conflict’ (3), ‘Structure’ (4) as well as ‘Psychic and psychosomatic diseases’ (5). The affiliation with the ICD-10 is realized by the fifth axis. Examination methods facilitate the application of the operational psychodynamic diagnosis. In addition, it is worth mentioning the study group’s selection of the five axes, which are relevant in both respects to a psychoanalytically orientated understanding of the patient and sufficiently suitable for operationalization. The researchers emphatically declare that the reduction to five axes may result in a loss of dynamic content, but this would be necessary for operationalization. Finally, concerning the use of operational psychodynamic diagnosis the researchers estimate a rater training of approximately 60 h.
From my point of view this operational psychodynamic system makes great progress in relating diagnostic procedures to research and everyday life. This edition is being translated into English at present, and I am looking forward to learning how the English-speaking readers will receive this great advancement of achievement in German psychodynamic diagnosis.
H. Freyberger, Hannover
Th. von Uexküll, R. Adler, J.M. Herrmann, K. Köhle, O. W. Schonecke, W. Wesiack
Psychosomatische Medizin, ed 5
The book of Thure von Uexküll et al. on Psychosomatic Medicine was first published in 1979 and is now in its fifth edition. This impressive fact shows that readers of the series have been satisfied, until now, with the original aim and concept of the book: the interpretation of psychosocial aspects in every clinicomedical subdiscipline. The present edition covers eight
main points which have been improved from one edition to the next. The main points are as following: Science Theory, Education and Postgraduate Medical Education (I); Concepts, Theories and Epidemiology (II); Diagnosis (III); Therapy (IV); Institutionalization (V); finally, the most interesting topic is entitled Medical Clinical Pictures with special emphasis on Behavior Disorders in the Sense of a Disease Cause, Functional Syndromes and Integrated Medical subdisciplines (VI). In addition, Patient’s Psychic Mastering of Diseases and Psychotherapeutic Dealing with Patients Suffering from Very Serious Diseases (VII). The last topic concerns the professional political situation (VIII). In the first chapter Dr. George Engel discusses the provocative question: How long is the medical science forced to rely upon a philosophy of life of the seventeenth century?
Secondly the quick succession of editions indicates the editors’ talent in recognizing the necessity of continuously discussing both modern practice-related aspects and research quotations. In the 5th edition seventeen new topics were integrated. For instance I should like to mention the chapters ‘Molecular Biology and Genetics in a Semiotic View, Heredity and Environment, Psychotraumatology, Psychoneuroendocrinology as well as the various acting-out modalities in Munchausen Syndrome and Factitious Disease.
Because of its strong thematic consideration for the requirements of psychosomatics and psychotherapy in everyday life and its quotations of research results, the basic concept of this book is optimally suited to meet three tendencies in Germany: the gathering of knowledge for the purpose of becoming a medical specialist in psychotherapeutic medicine, the optional postgraduate psychologico-medical education with regard to the so-called psychosomatic basic care and the presentation of the most relevant learning contents concerning the supplementary psychosomatic education in the various medical subdisciplines.
The fourth edition of this book is being translated into English at present and will be published in the near future. The reviewer regrets that this translation was not based on the fifth edition because the 5th edition is surely even better than the previous one.
H. Freyberger, Hannover

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E-Mail karger@karger.ch Fax + 41 61 306 12 34 http://www.karger.ch