Psychosomatic Assessment and Integrative Care

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Abstracts

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This supplement issue of *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics* includes the abstracts of advances, courses, lectures, symposia, clinical case discussions, research communications, and poster presentations of the 22nd World Congress on Psychosomatic Medicine.

The inadequacy of the traditional biomedical model in medical practice is getting increasing recognition. Psychosomatic Medicine represents an extraordinary opportunity to improve quality, direct and indirect costs, and effectiveness of the clinical approach in medicine and psychiatry by integrating biological, psychological, and sociocultural factors. Thirty years after Engel's proposal of the bio-psycho-social model (BPS), it is evident that disorders have psychosocial factors as causes or consequences. The BPS model is the theoretical and practical core of Psychosomatic Medicine. It allows clinicians to see illness as the result of interacting mechanisms at the cellular, interpersonal, and environmental level encompassing patients’ personality and family.

This conference highlights the broad connotations of the psychosomatic approach. The abstracts describe innovative studies and reflections on the most up-to-date and critical topics in psychosomatic medicine: psycho-oncology, eating disorders, cardiovascular diseases, personality, well-being, stress, sexual dysfunctions in medical practice, psychotherapy, psychopharmacology, family assessment and therapy, psycho-neuro-endocrinology, consultation liaison, clinician-patient relationship, alexithymia, illness behavior and somatization, psychopathological and psychological factors in specific medical disorders, classification in psychosomatic medicine. The crucial role of the psychosomatic assessment in clinical practice and the importance of proposing integrative treatment are underscored. An increasing number of studies suggest that the clinical process leading to medical diagnosis should be based on an expansion and a better organization of clinical information, encompassing subclinical distress, illness behavior, lifestyle, and psychological well-being. Such approach may be an antidote to oversimplified models that derive from biological reductionism, neglect individual responses to treatment and clash with clinical reality. The psychosomatic method thus becomes essential in medical practice and in scientific research.

The abstracts document how the psychosomatic approach is more timely than even and provides a home for the investigators and clinicians who want to venture off the beaten path of exclusive reliance on 20th century biomedicine.

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