The Psychosomatic Factor in Clinical Practice

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Abstracts

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This supplement of *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics* includes the abstracts of lectures, symposia, clinical case discussions, and poster presentations of the 23rd World Congress of Psychosomatic Medicine.

The inadequacy of the traditional biomedical model in medical practice is getting increasing recognition. Psychosomatic medicine represents an extraordinary opportunity to improve clinical practice in medicine and psychiatry by integrating biological, psychological, and sociocultural factors. The bio-psycho-social model (BPS) 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 psychosomatic factor in clinical practice. 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 factor in clinical practice and research as well as the importance of proposing integrative treatment are underscored. An increasing number of studies suggest that the clinical process leading to medical diagnosis should be also based on a proper assessment of the psychosomatic factor, 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 factor thus becomes essential in medical practice and in scientific research.

The abstracts document how the psychosomatic factor in clinical practice 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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