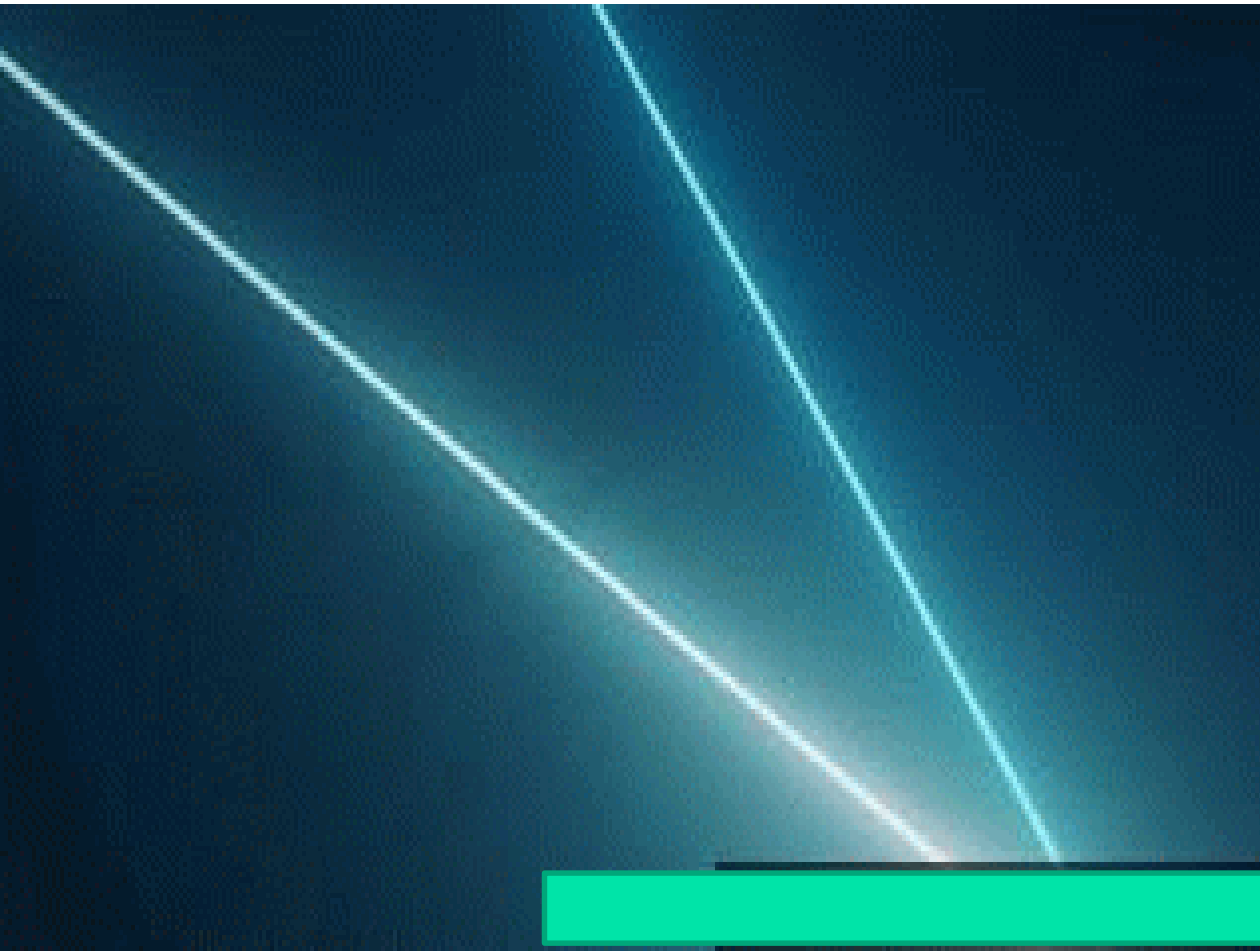


# Lecture V: The psychosomatic and somatopsychological concepts in medicine



**Presented by: -  
PhD Mariana  
Cernitanu**



# Structure

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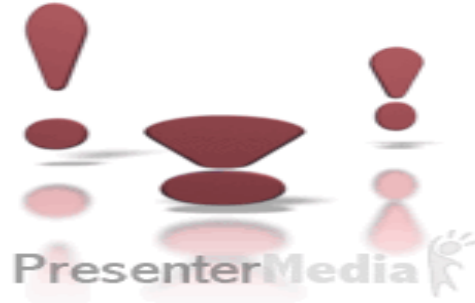
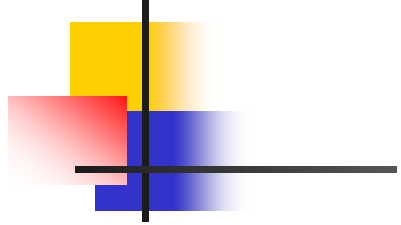
- Psychosomatic medicine
- Psychosomatic disorder classification
- Symptoms and Causes of Psychosomatic Disorder
- Treatment and Prevention of Psychosomatic Disorder



# Psychosomatics:

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- Psychosomatics = A branch of medicine that looks at the relationship between emotional and physical health
- Psychosomatic: 'psyche' = soul and 'soma' = body



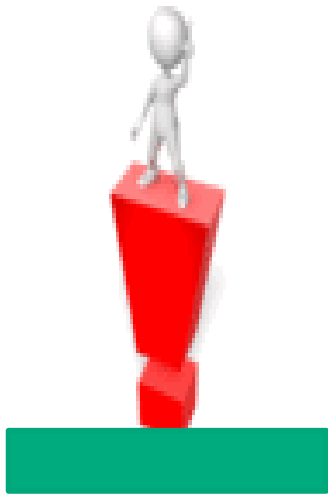
- if our **healthy mental state** could help us in getting relief, it is also likely that **poor mental health** can affect our physical being.
- The term '**psychosomatic disorder**' is used for such conditions.



# Psychosomatic medicine

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- is an interdisciplinary medical field studying the relationships of social, psychological, and behavioral factors on bodily processes and well-being of humans.





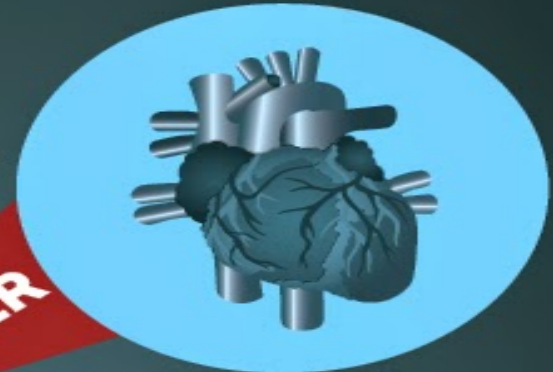
Clinical situations where **mental processes** (stress, individual peculiarities, psychological trauma etc), act as a major factor affecting medical outcomes are areas where *psychosomatic medicine* has competence.

# DISEASES YOUR EMOTIONS ARE CONNECTED TO



**REPPRESSED  
ANGER**

- TENSION HEADACHES
- MIGRAINES
- CHRONIC BACK PAIN
- FIBROMYALGIA



**ANGER**

- HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE
- HEART DISEASE



**ANXIETY**

- IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME
- MITRAL VALVE PROLAPSE
- HEART PALPITATIONS



**RESENTMENT**



- AUTOIMMUNE DISORDERS
- RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS
- LUPUS
- MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS



# What Is Psychosomatic Disorder?

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The term 'psychosomatic disorder' is used for a physical disease that is thought to be caused or made worse by mental factors. 'Psyche' refers to the mind and 'somatic' refers to the physical signs and symptoms that are observed for the disease.

Usually, most diseases are psychosomatic as they have mental and physical components.



# History of psychosomatics

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- In the medieval Islamic world the Muslim psychologist-physicians Ahmed ibn Sahl al-Balkhi (d. 934) and Haly Abbas (d. 994) developed an early understanding of illness that was due to the interaction of the mind and the body.

They realized how a patient's physiology and psychology can have an effect on one another.



# History of psychosomatics

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- Franz Alexander led in the beginnings of the 20th century, the movement looking for the dynamic interrelation between mind and body.
- He developed the theory about “strong innate” and “weak innate” systems on humans.



# History of psychosomatics

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- **Sigmund Freud** pursued a deep interest in psychosomatic illnesses. In his psychodynamic theory, somatization is conceptualized as an ego defense, the unconscious rechanneling of repressed emotions into somatic symptoms.
- **!!! Sigmund Freud**'s famous case study of Anna O. featured a woman who suffered from numerous physical symptoms, which Freud believed were the result of repressed grief over her father's illness.

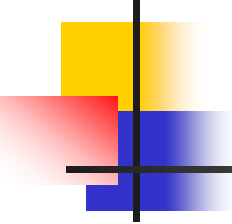


# How can the mind affect physical diseases?

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When we are afraid, stressed or anxious we may develop:

- A fast heart rate.
- A 'thumping heart' (palpitations).
- Feeling sick (nauseated).
- Shaking (tremor).
- Sweating.
- Dry mouth.
- Chest pain.
- Headaches.
- A knot in the stomach.
- Fast breathing.

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- 
- These physical symptoms are due to increased activity of nervous impulses sent from the brain to various parts of the body and to the release of adrenaline (epinephrine) into the bloodstream when we are anxious, stressed or pressured.

- Think about: systematical influence of stress, anxiety, negative emotions, intensive emotions or pressure on somatic body.



# Symptoms of Psychosomatic Disorder


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- Quickened heart rate
- Palpitation (thumping in the heart)
- Nausea
- Tremors
- Pain
- Dry mouth
- Perspiration
- Chest pain
- Rapid breathing
- Faintness
- Excess fatigue
- A knot in the stomach
- Fast breathing
- Neurologic problems
- Gastrointestinal complaints



# Psychosomatic disorder or Somatoform disorder

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- is a mental disorder characterized by *physical symptoms that mimic physical disease or injury for which there is no identifiable physical cause.*
  - The symptoms that result from a somatoform disorder are due to mental factors.
  - A diagnosis of a somatoform disorder implies that mental factors are a large contributor to the symptoms' onset, severity and duration.



- People who have somatoform disorder, medical test results are either normal or don't explain the person's symptoms.


- People who have this disorder may undergo several medical evaluations and tests to be sure that they do not have an illness related to a physical cause or central lesion.



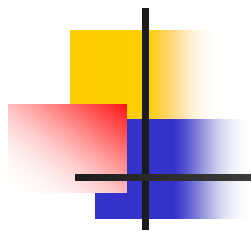
Patients with psychosomatic disorder often become very worried about their health because the doctors are unable to find a cause for their health problems.

Their symptoms are similar to the symptoms of other illnesses and may last for several years.

A diagnosis of a somatoform disorder implies that mental factors are a large contributor to the symptoms' onset, severity and duration.

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- **Psychosomatic disorders** - disorders in which mental factors play a significant role in the development, expression, or resolution of a physical illness.





- The most of physical diseases are believed to have a mental component derived from the stresses and strains of everyday living.

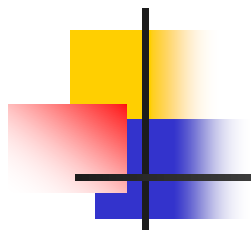
This is the case, for example, of lower back pain and high blood pressure, which appear to be partly related to stresses in everyday life.



# Somatization disorder or psychosomatic disorder (also **Briquet's disorder** or, in antiquity - **hysteria**)

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- is a psychiatric diagnosis applied to patients who persistently complain of varied physical symptoms that have no identifiable physical origin.
- One common general etiological explanation is that internal psychological conflicts are unconsciously expressed as physical signs.



- Patients with somatization disorder will typically visit many doctors in pursuit of clear diagnosis and effective treatment.



Exemples of psychosomatic patients diagnosis:  
metabolic dysfunction or vegetative system dysfunction



# Criteria a psychosomatic disorder:

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- The DSM-IV establishes the following five criteria for the diagnosis of this disorder:
  - - a history of somatic symptoms prior to the age of 30.
  - - pain in at least four different sites on the body.
  - - two gastrointestinal problems other than pain such as vomiting or diarrhea.
  - - one sexual symptom such as lack of interest or erectile dysfunction.
  - - one pseudoneurological symptom such as fainting or blindness.



# Causes:

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- The exact cause for the evolution of psychosomatic disorder is unknown. Studies reveal that the physical disorders associated with mental stress are due to the hyperactivity of the nerve impulses sent from the brain to the other parts of the body, which can cause the secretion of adrenaline into the blood, leading to a state of anxiousness.



# INFLUENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

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**Stress altering time:** Stress will alter the time period that is utilized for the development, worsening, or recovery from the general medical condition. For example, when a person is angry, it prolongs the duration of **high blood pressure**.

**Intrusion of stress:** The psychological factors might intrude into the treatment provided for the general medical condition and create problems.

**Exacerbation:** Anxiety factors make the symptoms of the medical condition worsen, thereby increasing its severity.

**Generation of risk factors:** The stress component will generate many other risk factors associated with health issues like diabetes, headache, etc



# Biological RISK FACTORS OF PSYCHOSOMATIC DISORDER

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**Diabetes:** Type-2 diabetic patients are more susceptible to stress-related hypertension. The same stress factors of hypertension exacerbate the diabetic condition.

**Hypertension:** Some psychology triggering factors like negative emotional state, frequent adverse stress, and social factors such as economic status and life events have an indirect relation with the levels of blood pressure.

**Heart disease-associated arteriosclerosis:** Studies have concluded that the development of coronary heart disease is correlated with several risk factors in which depression, anxiety, and stress are also a major cause.

**Respiratory problems:** Apart from various etiological influences, emotional stress is a major triggering factor associated with the induction of bronchial asthma.

**Gastrointestinal problems:** Peptic ulcer formation is related to stressful life events of an individual.

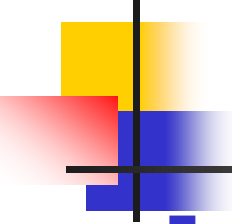


This condition can be triggered by various life factors as follows:

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- **Genetics:** A few studies state that the peculiar genetic aberrations in an individual may turn into a direct cause for this condition.
- **Irregular biological conditions:** Alteration in glucose metabolism, amino acid levels in serum, etc.,
- **Stress influence:** Stressful events like trauma, abuse, frequent illness, fear, depression, anger, guilt, insecurity, and other difficult situations.
- **Family circumstances:** Parental absence, behavior of parents toward the child, and relationship difficulties are also a major origin of psychosomatic disorders.

# PSYCHOSOMATIC DISORDERS' THEORIES

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- **The first theory** is that the symptoms of somatization disorder represent the body's own defense against psychological stress. This theory states that the mind has a finite capacity to cope with stress and strains. Therefore, increasing social or emotional stresses beyond a certain point are experienced as physical symptoms, principally affecting **the digestive, nervous, and reproductive systems.**



# The second theory for the cause of somatization disorder

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- **the disorder occurs due to heightened (hyper)sensitivity to internal physical sensations.**  
Some people have the ability to feel even the slightest amount of discomfort or pain within their body. With this hypersensitivity, the patient would sense pain that the brain normally would not register in the average person such as minor changes in one's heartbeat.
- Somatization disorder would then be very closely related to panic disorder under this theory. However, not much is known about hypersensitivity and its relevance to somatization disorder.



# The third theory:

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- somatization disorder is caused by **one's own negative thoughts and overemphasized fears**. Their catastrophic thinking about even the slightest ailments such as thinking a cramp in their shoulder is a tumor, or shortness of breath is due to asthma, could lead those who have somatization disorder to actually worsen their symptoms. This then causes them to feel more pain for just a simple thing like a headache. Often the patients feel like they have a rare disease. This is due to the fact that their doctors would not be able to have a medical explanation for their over exaggerated pain that the patient actually thinks is there.
- This thinking that the symptom is catastrophic also often reduces the activities they normally do.



# **TYPES OF PSYCHOSOMATIC disorders**

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- 1. Undifferentiated Somatoform Disorder**
- 2. Somatization Disorder**
- 3. Unspecified Somatoform Disorder**
- 4. Conversion Disorder**
- 5. Illness Anxiety Disorder (Hypochondriasis)**
- 6. Pain Disorder**
- 7. Body Dysmorphic Disorder**



# Undifferentiated Somatoform Disorder

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**1. In Undifferentiated Somatoform Disorder,** individual experience one or more symptoms (pain, fatigue, appetite loss, and gastrointestinal symptoms) for a minimum of six months).



## 2. Somatization Disorder

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- Symptoms include pain, sexual symptoms, gastrointestinal symptoms, neurological symptoms, menstrual symptoms, and fatigue. Seen in people between 18 and 30 years of age, who experience these symptoms for years without any explanation for them.



## **3. Unspecified Somatoform Disorder**

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**3. In Unspecified Somatoform Disorder –**  
for ex: Patients falsely believe that they are pregnant because of signs like termination of menstruation, fetal movement, labor pains, nausea, etc.



## 4. Conversion Disorder

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**4. In Conversion Disorder** symptoms include inability to make a sound, sudden illness attacks, unconsciousness, drooping of the upper eyelids, sensation loss in one or more body parts, and vision problems.



## 5. Hypochondriasis

### (Illness Anxiety Disorder)

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**Hypochondriasis** patients fear that they have a dangerous illness that is going to cause major harm to their body. They often visit multiple doctors to prove this.



## 6. Pain Disorder

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In **pain disorder**, symptoms include experiencing pain in one or more parts of the body over long periods, without any explanation.



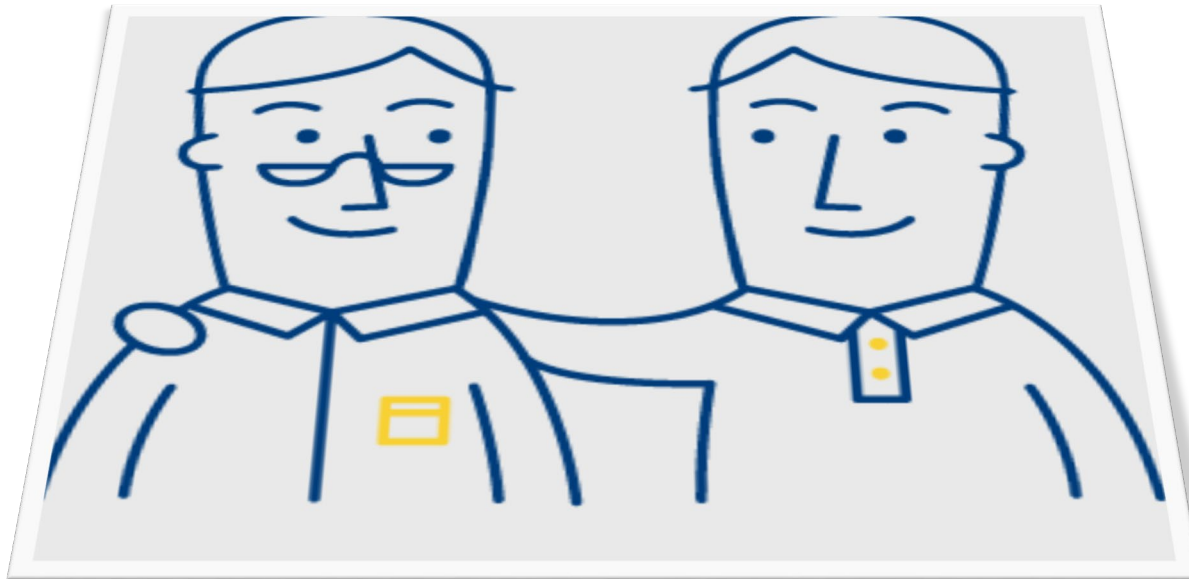
## 7. Body Dysmorphic Disorder

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People affected with **Body Dysmorphic Disorder** feel that their body is defective and often resort to cosmetic treatments to improve their appearance.



# How To Treat Psychosomatic Disorder





# Prevention

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- While there is no known way to prevent the acquisition of somatization disorder, those who are prone to it should benefit from greater awareness of the condition. This can be obtained by going to counseling or other psychological conventions.
- In addition, having a good relationship with a health care provider is very beneficial. With early knowledge of the disorder, patients will be well aware of **how to deal with stressors**, which could help keep the symptoms from becoming more severe.



# Treatment of psychosomatic disorders

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In modern society, psychosomatic aspects of illness are often attributed to stress, making the remediation of stress one important factor in the development, treatment, and prevention of psychosomatic illness.

- Psychosomatic medicine is considered a subspecialty of the fields of psychiatry and neurology. Therefore medical treatments (antidepressants) and psychotherapy (behavioral therapy) are used to treat psychosomatic disorders.



# Treatment of psychosomatic disorders

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- Healthcare workers will usually try to treat a person as a whole and take into account **mental** and **social** factors which may be contributing to a disease. Therefore, treatments to ease stress, anxiety, depression, etc, may help if they are thought to be contributing to physical disease.



# TREATMENT methods FOR PSYCHOSOMATIC DISORDER

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1. Yoga, Meditation,
2. Supportive Medication
3. Fasting Therapy
4. Hypnosis
5. Cognitive Behavior Therapy



# 1. Yoga & Meditation

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**Yoga includes meditation and relaxation exercises that can help manage psychosomatic disorders. As these disorders are triggered by mental conditions like anxiety and stress, taking part in stress-busting activities like yoga can help the relieve these mental issues. Simple breathing exercises and asanas that will relax your mind can be practiced on a daily basis.**

**Yoga has a calming effect on the body and makes you more aware and accepting of yourself and your surroundings. Experiments have shown yoga to be as effective as drugs when it comes to psychosomatic disorders.**

## **2. Medication For Psychosomatic Disorders**



**Specific drugs are prescribed by general physicians to alleviate some of the physical symptoms. Most doctors also recommend patients to psychologists/psychotherapists for therapy as the drugs only provide temporary relief.**

**The different types used for treatment are tricyclic antidepressants (TCA), serotonin and noradrenaline reuptake inhibitors (SNRI), atypical antipsychotics, serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI), and herbal medications.**

**Different combinations of drugs are prescribed by specialists depending on the age of the patient, intensity of the disease, duration, and responsiveness to treatment.**

### 3. Fasting (post, abtinere) Therapy For Psychosomatic Disorders



A treatment well known in Japan, **fasting therapy** has successfully alleviated both physical and psychological symptoms in psychosomatic disorder patients.

According to this therapy, the autonomic nervous system and endocrine system are regulated by the fasting process. As a result, the body re-establishes its balance for both mental health and physical health

## 4. Hypnosis



**This method of treatment aims to find the solution to the physical symptoms within the patient's subconscious.**

**Migraines, asthma, and gastrointestinal issues seen with psychosomatic disorders are often treated by [hypnosis](#).**

**Long-term hypnotherapy can work effectively to resolve the underlying emotions and stop the psyche from affecting the body and the symptoms from developing.**

**Anger, fear, and dependency issues have been resolved successfully with this therapy.**

## 5. Cognitive Behavior Therapy



Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a short-term, goal-oriented psychotherapy treatment that takes a hands-on, practical approach to problem-solving.

Its goal is to change patterns of thinking or behavior that are behind people's difficulties, and so change the way they feel.

CBT works by changing people's attitudes and their behavior by focusing on the thoughts, images, beliefs and attitudes that are held (a person's *cognitive processes*) and how these processes relate to the way a person behaves, as a way of dealing with emotional problems.



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Thank  
you

