

Psychosomatic Medicine in Romania

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Background: Countries from Central and Eastern Europe represent a sensible area for studying psychosomatic disorders. After the decline of the totalitarian political system and of the centralized state economy a period of transition into free market economy has begun, exerting extensive social consequences. With changing economical conditions and increasing unemployment societal expectations were re-formulated, exceeding pressure upon individuals for recasting social roles and identities. Interpersonal relationships became more complex, emulating new expectancies and constituting a burden for many individuals. Also a new competitive and hard-working generation evolved developing the common burnout troubles of the westernized world. The risk for developing and maintaining psychosomatic disorders increased in the context of stress, social insecurity, and the changing health system: decreasing immunity with allergic (especially respiratory) disorders, cardiovascular disorders, functional gastrointestinal disorders, associated with depressive and anxiety disorders were multiplying. Thereby this economically and political transiting region may represent a target area for studying phenomenology and treatment of psychosomatic disorders.

Psychosomatic medicine and facilities of outpatient and inpatient treatment are not defined in Romania.

Psychosomatic care in other medical specialties has been run in internal medicine and/or other departments (allergology, psychiatry). Such integrative approaches are much influenced by the physician's concept (beliefs!) and by the activity of a clinical psychologist in the department (as for some approaches in oncology, gynecology, and dermatology).

Psychosomatic medicine and its relation to psychiatry is a domain with tradition, all over the years the relationship was approached in medical and psychology manuals, in university lectures with topics like psychosexual disorders, eating disorders, and psychological disturbances in endocrine diseases.

Psychosomatic Medicine in postgraduate medical training: Prof. Dr. B.I.Iamandescu has organized lectures in the frame of Postgraduate Department of the "Carol Davila" University for Medicine Bucharest (1995-2002). Diploma psychologists also addressed these courses.

Psychosomatic issues (e.g. eating disorders, perinatal depression, pain disorders, stress, vulnerability and resilience) have been approached in post-graduate training for cognitive-behavioral therapy by Dr. Joja (since 2003 as "Grandparent" EAP).

Psychosomatic medicine is the topic of optional (graduate) courses in some university establishments in Romania: (1) the “Carol Davila” University for Medicine Bucharest; (2) University of Medicine and Pharmacy “Iuliu Hatieganu”, Cluj; (3) the Psychology Department of the “Titu Maiorescu” University Bucharest.

Psychosomatic care and financial resources: no special legal framework.

Institutions focusing on psychosomatic research: cited below.

Issues of research and research interests in Romania are concerning: Allergic diseases in the Allergology and Internal Medicine Department of Colentina Hospital Bucharest, conducted by Prof. Dr. B. I. Iamandescu; functional gastrointestinal disorders are approached in the Third Medical Dept. of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy “Iuliu Hatieganu”, Cluj, with Dr. Dan Dumitrascu conducting research. Dr. Dan Dumitrascu also organized a symposium on Psychosomatic Medicine in Cluj (2003) with the support of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in the frame of the Stability Pact and he is also organizing a Symposium on Neuro-gastroenterology in Brasov (Sept. 2005) with the same support. These meetings benefit of the participation of experts from Germany and South East European countries.

Eating Disorders, with their broad spectrum, have been approached in the C. I. Parhon Institute of Endocrinology, Bucharest. Research work of Dr. O. Joja, included a Ph.D. study on comparative therapies for eating disorders (1994), conducting a series of diploma thesis on eating disorders and conducting the *COST (Cooperation for Science and Technology) ActionB6 Project “Efficient Psychotherapy in Eating Disorders”* which was coordinated by the European Commission for nineteen participating countries (1997-2000). Dr. Joja organized a section “*Psychosomatic and Psychotherapeutic Aspects of Environment Caused Diseases*” for the Symposium “Men and Environment Restraints in Science, Industry/Economy and Politics” in the frame of the special program conceived by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation for scientific reconstruction in South Eastern Europe. The symposium was organized by the *Politehnica University Timisoara* (2005).

Needs for further development: Disease being considered as an end result of a series of somatic and/or psychological events perceived as stressful by the individual, clinical research may orient to “health-belief-models” that are shifting disease and attitudes to them. Research may focus upon beliefs and attitudes at least as much as upon symptoms and medication. *Belief-conditioned resilience* may become a thorough provider of research progress, as one of the primary goals of psychosomatic medicine is to develop methods applicable to specific and individual diagnosis and treatment.