

FUNCTIONAL ILLNESS IN PRIMARY CARE



ICEBREAKER

- Tell us your name and one thing that people wont know about

YOUR EXPECTATIONS FROM THE SESSION

- How comfortable do you feel in dealing with this issue?
- Baggage check
- Most GPs think that effective management strategies are lacking <https://bit.ly/2nHS6RT>
- Cost estimated to run to €12 billion for a population of 80 million <https://bit.ly/32oAmtT>

PSYCHOSOMATIC SYMPTOMS ARE NORMAL

- Tears, Blushing, headache when busy
- How does this differ from patients who present with “medically unexplained symptoms.”

TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

- Brainstorm terms
 - Psychosomatic
 - Functional Illness
 - Conversion Disorder, Dissociative disorder
 - Somatic symptom Disorder

INDIVIDUAL CONDITIONS

- Fibromyalgia <https://bit.ly/2MS0yGL>
 - “Some specialists have argued that a diagnosis of fibromyalgia is unhelpful because it over-medicalises this complex of distressing, medically unexplained symptoms. But in our experience, many patients find the diagnosis helpful, especially when combined with a common sense explanation of the link between poor sleep, tiredness, and pain.”

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS AFFECTING MEDICAL CONDITIONS

- This the most common situation in primary care
 - Laryngeal spasm in the context of asthma
 - Development of chronic pain after musculoskeletal insult

IT'S ALL IN YOUR HEAD

[HTTPS://BIT.LY/2MEQNN3](https://bit.ly/2MEQNN3)

- "Everybody's experience of illness is their own, and that is where illness become distinct from disease. I recall a non-medical friend of mine wondering why it was not possible to define all the characteristics of single disease.... Tap your symptoms into a computer screen and then a diagnosis pops up on a screen. That friend had failed to understand the human condition."

Suzanne O'Sullivan



DANGER!

- We see large numbers of patients with non-specific symptoms and some of them have cancer
- “Two thirds of patients with multiple myeloma present with back pain, and nearly half of patients with pancreatic cancer with abdominal pain.” <https://bit.ly/35xvAMo>
 - Calibrate index of suspicion
 - Consider minimum routine data gathering for patients presenting with abdominal or msk pain

A RANKING SYSTEM OF SUFFERING

- Psychiatric diseases generally at the bottom <https://bit.ly/2B9OIJ8>
- The stigma of psychosomatic illness <https://bit.ly/2MaTd5L>
- Stigma: status loss, stereotyping, discrimination.
- Functional illnesses are stigmatised, although maybe less than depression.

ANCIENT HISTORY

- Erasistratus
- c. 304 – c. 250 BC
- Greek anatomist and royal physician

HISTORY

- Jean Martin Charcot
- Spent decades trying to understand “hysteria” at Hospice de la Salpêtrière
- Pain through the ages <https://bit.ly/2BiEgsb>

WORK IN PAIRS

- Your experiences with functional disorders or somatising patients.

SAFE (1995) PART I (10 MINUTES)

- Tell me how relatable the main character Carol is in your opinion
- How do you think the clinician handled the situation

PART 2 (8 MINUTES)

- How does Carol try to get herself better? How successful is this?
- Talk about the imagery that you saw in the film
- What do you think the director believes about his character's illness. Does he believe she has environmental illness, or psychosomatic problems?

REVERSE BRAINSTORMING

- What would be the most unhelpful phrases/ approaches for this patient or other similar patients.

HELP!

- Guidance for Health Professionals on Medically Unexplained Symptoms <https://bit.ly/32ivqXt>
 - Sometimes the only therapy needed is the strength of your doctor patient relationship. Continuity and long term relationship helps.
- RCGP Top 10 Tips for Medically Unexplained Symptoms
 - Focus on managing the symptoms, not finding a cure
 - Remain aware of countertransference feelings of anger and frustration. Make sure you have support available to discuss cases if needed.

TECHNIQUES

- Balint groups
- CBT (for some)
- Consultation models
 - BATHE

TECHNIQUES

- Consultation models
 - Disease Illness model
 - Reattribution <https://bit.ly/31mpsDD> <https://bit.ly/2qohhtj>
- Empathy: emotional/ cognitive <https://bit.ly/2MsdVOV>

PLENARY

- Feedback