Aim of the course

The course discusses chronic somatic illnesses from a biopsychosocial viewpoint. The first few classes provide a theoretical introduction, in which we familiarize ourselves with the historical background and major psychological models of psychosomatic and somatization diseases. The following part of the course the chronic illnesses which are the most common, most actual and has the biggest societal impact will be discussed in detail. Our goal is to get a complex picture about the psychological, above all healthy psychological questions and tasks in connection with the certain diseases. The course does not only focus on presenting the literature, but also wishes to provide a complex picture of what kind of challenges arise with having to live with the certain diseases and what kind of healthy psychological duties com to the foreground. Diving into the literature is accompanied by patient interviews, case discussions, interviews with the health care personnel, knowing self-help groups, knowing of disease specific tests and intervention techniques as a part of project works.

Learning outcome, competences

knowledge:

knowledge of psychological models of chronic somatic diseases
knowledge of the basic biological characteristics of certain diseases
knowledge of the major psychological questions regarding certain diseases (comorbid disorders, biopsychosocial background mechanisms, possibilities of psychological interventions, specific questions of quality of life)

attitude:

developing an opened attitude, which involves being interested in somatic symptoms and diseases
developing an appropriate attitude/relationship with health care personnel

skills:

savvy in learning and using medical language of different somatic diseases
recognizing the possible psychosomatic and somatopsychic interactions in certain diseases
the ability to highlight the major health psychological questions in case studies and matching them to possible interventions

Content of the course

Topics of the course

Conceptual introduction section
Somatic diseases and conditions in psychology – historical summary, trends

Major psychological models of psychosomatic vulnerability (1: personality, regression models, the role of attachment, the role of social relations and family) (2: cognitive model: alexithymia, somatosensory amplification, catastrophizing, Brown's integrative conceptual model, filter model)

Disease-specific section (the most common diseases are presented in every course description, in case of the less common problems focus may change)

Gastrointestinal diseases (gastric ulcer, inflammatory bowel diseases, irritable bowel syndrome) Cardio-vascular diseases (hypertension, arteriosclerosis, infarction and stroke)
Oncological diseases
Asthma, COPD
Allergies and intolerances (hayfever, multiple chemical sensitivity, lactose and gluten intolerance)
Gynecological diseases (endometriosis, PCOS, menstruation diseases, gynecological infections)
Diabetes, metabolic disorders
Pain disorders (chronic pelvic pain, headaches, fibromyalgia)
Psychological issues of transplantation
Psychological care of the disabled
Psychological issues of autoimmune diseases

Learning activities, learning methods
Frontal education about the major psychological questions of the diseases
Interactive, experience based exercises to practice psychological skills connected to somatic patients project works focusing on a disease

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation of outcomes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Learning requirements, mode of evaluation, criteria of evaluation:</td>
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<tr>
<td>requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>steady knowledge of the theoretical background (two tests on the seminar, the first on the theoretical background, second on the disease specific section)</td>
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<tr>
<td>active participation in the interactive exercises</td>
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<tr>
<td>participation in the project work (evaluation of the project work)</td>
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mode of evaluation: 5 degree scale, based on the average of the grades given on the three parts of course requirements
1. test (theoretical background) 30%
2. test (disease specific part) 30%
3. project work 40%
criteria of evaluation:
the depth of understanding the biopsychosocial interactions and the required basic knowledge the ability of applying the mastered skills

Reading list
Compulsory reading list
(for the theoretical introduction)


(for the disease specific part)


