

PSYCHOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF PSYCHOSOMATIC DISEASES

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Annotation: This article examines the impact of psychosomatic diseases and their causative psychological factors, such as stress, emotional tension, personality traits, and internal conflicts, on the development of somatic diseases. Information is provided on modern interpretations of the psychosomatic approach, as well as the importance of psychoprophylaxis and psychocorrection methods.

Key words: psychosomatics, stress, emotional state, internal conflict, somatic diseases, psychological factors.

In the current era of globalization and rapid lifestyle, the factors affecting human health are becoming increasingly complex. Many forms of physical diseases are scientifically proven to be associated not only with biological but also with psychological causes. From this perspective, the field of psychosomatics occupies an important place in modern medicine and psychology. Psychosomatics studies the close relationship between a person's mental state and the body. Psychosomatic diseases are physical illnesses that arise or intensify as a result of emotional experiences, stress, internal conflicts, and negative emotions. The main purpose of this article is to scientifically explain the process of formation of psychosomatic diseases and the possibilities of their psychological investigation.

Ibn Sina (Avicenna) stated that the origin of diseases is related to the nervous system, and that anger, fear, and severe emotional stress weaken the body and contribute to disease development. His teachings on the importance of the nervous system in regulating bodily functions closely resemble the theory of nervism developed by European scientists in the early 20th century. Ibn Sina experimentally proved that pulse rate is closely connected with the activity of the nervous system. In his works, it is noted that nerve centers receive information from internal organs through special nerve fibers and regulate their activity. His views on the unity of body and mind have been fully confirmed by modern medical achievements and laid the foundation for the field known as psychosomatic medicine [1].

Psychosomatics reflects the relationship between mental state and physical health. According to the psychosomatic approach, the human organism is an integrated system in which psychological processes directly influence somatic functions. Scientists such as Z. Freud, F. Alexander, and F. Dunbar studied the psychodynamic foundations of psychosomatic diseases. According to their views, repressed emotions and unconscious conflicts manifest themselves through physical symptoms. Psychologists Cheek and Lecorn (1968) identified the following causes of psychosomatic diseases:

1. **Conflict** – internal contradictions between different psychological states may lead to the formation of psychosomatic symptoms.

2. **Body language message** – a metaphorical expression of an unresolved psychological problem (for example, “I cannot digest this”).

3. **Secondary gain from illness** – health problems that provide some conditional benefit to the individual or their close relatives.

4. **Trauma** – the disease may originate from past traumatic experiences such as betrayal, rejection, abandonment, humiliation, or injustice.

5. **Identification** – symptoms may develop as a result of identifying with another person (a hero, parent, or mentor), especially someone who has passed away, allowing emotional attachment to persist.

6. **Self-punishment** – psychosomatic symptoms may represent unconscious self-punishment for real or imagined guilt, or an attempt to make others feel guilty.

7. **Suggestion** – symptoms may arise due to negative beliefs suggested by authoritative figures such as parents, doctors, or professors [2].

Analysis of these causes shows that psychosomatic diseases often arise from the inability to express emotional tension, which then manifests at the bodily level.

The term “psychosomatics” was first introduced in 1818 by the German physician Johann Christian Heinroth. Later, in the early 20th century, the introduction of psychological care in somatic clinics greatly contributed to the development of psychosomatic medicine in Europe and the United States.

Sigmund Freud wrote: “If we drive a problem out through the door, it returns through the window in the form of a symptom.” Psychosomatics is based on a psychological defense mechanism called regression, meaning that people try to avoid thinking about problems, ignore them, and avoid confronting them. As a result, unresolved problems shift from social or psychological levels to the physical level of the body [3].

The following scientific schools contributed significantly to the development of psychosomatic medicine:

1. In the United States, theoretical foundations of psychosomatics were developed based on psychoanalytic concepts (F. Alexander, H. F. Dunbar, I. Weiss, G. Engel);
2. In Germany, philosophical foundations of psychosomatics were studied (W. von Krehl, von Weizsäcker, von Bergmann);
3. In Russia, research on psychosomatic diseases was based on I. P. Pavlov’s theory of higher nervous activity.

Since the early 20th century, I. P. Pavlov demonstrated the importance of the central nervous system in regulating somatic functions. His follower K. Anokhin further developed this idea by creating the theory of functional systems of the organism, which allowed a new understanding of the role of emotions and motivation in the development of somatic diseases [4].

The mechanisms of psychosomatic disease formation include stress and psychophysiological reactions. Chronic stress disrupts hormonal balance and negatively affects the autonomic nervous system, leading to functional disorders in cardiovascular, digestive, and respiratory systems.

The influence of emotional states is also significant. Negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, anger, and depression, when prolonged, may cause somatic symptoms. For example, suppressed anger may contribute to hypertension, while anxiety may lead to bronchial asthma.

Scientific literature identifies the following diseases as psychosomatic:

- Gastric and duodenal ulcers
- Bronchial asthma
- Arterial hypertension
- Migraine
- Allergic rhinitis
- Skin diseases such as psoriasis and dermatitis

In these diseases, psychological factors play an important role in their onset, progression, and recurrence.

The following psychological methods are used in the study and treatment of psychosomatic diseases:

- Clinical interviews
- Psychodiagnostic tests (MMPI, Beck Depression Inventory)
- Stress assessment methods
- Personality assessment questionnaires

Thus, psychosomatic diseases clearly demonstrate the close relationship between mental state and physical health. Their origin and progression are closely related to psychological factors. Effective prevention and treatment require integration of medical and psychological

approaches. Psychological research allows a deeper understanding of psychosomatic diseases and ensures an individualized approach to treatment.

References

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