

## THE PSYCHOLOGIST'S ROLE IN OFFERING SERVICE IN HEALTH CENTERS: A REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

Health psychology is a discipline which has seen a very rapid growth over the years, by integrating in this way with highly effective disciplines in human welfare center. The main strategy which is practiced within health psychology is to focus on the bio-psycho-social factors. Numerous researchers argue that health and disease occurs as a result of a mix between these biological, psychological and social factors. Biological determinants consist on genetic conditions and inherited personality traits. The discipline of psychology as a discipline that deals specifically with the behavior, and also plays an important role in understanding the concepts of health and disease, since both these concepts are significantly affected by human behavior itself. The effect of the role of health psychologists can be seen in some areas which provide advisory assistance, relief, preparatory preventive primary care, secondary and tertiary, on the other hand the health psychologists or health psychology discipline itself is a discipline which constantly promotes ways how an individual or a society can live in a healthy way and avoid or prevent behaviors that may negatively affect the health of the individual but also to society in general. The purpose of this article is to describe the role of health psychologist (but even clinical advisory) in providing health care seen from the biopsychosocial perspective about health and disease.

**Keywords:** Psychology, health psychology, biopsychosocial model.

### INTRODUCTION

The concept of disease varies in different periods, and it's historically determined and depending on the socio-cultural context. The concept of health is even more difficult to determine because it is an individual situation. To explain this notion are necessary to use different arguments. Main models that try to give an explanation are divided into two main areas such as biomedical model and the biopsychosocial one. Biomedical model is a model that fully reflects the postulates of classical medicine applied to health and disease. This model excludes psychological and social factors including biological factors, as a way of understanding the diseases or disorders (Farlex Partner Medical Dictionary, Farlex 2012). Biomedical processes are separated from bio-psycho-social and are thought to be the sole responsible for the genesis of the disease, where the body is like a machine and the disease is the failure of the machine. There are simple reasons that cause pathogenic effects, and in the center of the universe are the conditions and pathogenic effects (Trovato, 2012). In the traditional biomedical model it is found the reductionist approach, which is looking to organic dysfunctional causes (system), which performs an "objectiv" operation and it "fragments" the reality of the patient, taking into consideration only the damaged part of the body, not showing interest for the rest. As a result, the disease is a deviation from the norm and for any reason there is a primary explanation objectively identifiable. The patient care through the use of "objective" funds as drugs (medicines), operations, local applications, in accordance with the type and level of deficit physical biochemical and functional condition. And thus become an exception of socio-psychological factors and behavioral which are not

considered as possible causes of the disease and are not in the process of diagnosis (Ongaro & Basaglia, 1982; Engel, 1977; Schneiderman, Ironson, Siegel 2005).

Speaking from this perspective, he explained that "biomedical model requires not only that the disease is treated as independent from the subject's social behavior, but also claims that abnormal behavior can be explained on the basis of somatic processes (biochemical and neurophysiological). The biomedical model includes both reductionism, who is the mind-body dualism, the doctrine that divides mental from somatic (Fortunin, 2002). Another equally important model is the bio-psychosocial model. Biopsychosocial model is a model that takes into account the psycho-social factors, and believes that in carrying out the assessment and determination of medical diagnosis, it should be considered not only biological factors, but also psychological and social ones (Engel, 1977; Consoli, 2000; Lakhan, 2007). World Health Organization (WHO) in 1946 identified and dismissed the old concepts in which health is conceived as a mere disease absence, calling it an "able, complete welfare of mental, physical and social." The biopsychosocial model includes a broad overview of the contributions of sociology, psychology and pedagogy that prevail from the medical one, designed to balance individual in harmony with all components (biological, psychological, social) (Campbell, Rohrbaugh, 2006). The existence of such potential within each of us, makes the individual to be able to eliminate diseases that may occur during the time frame of life. The modern concept of health, requires a broader definition, as a full interdisciplinary, and that health cannot be understood in parts. Human health is closely linked to the result of the interaction between man and the environment, where the environment constitutes the main framework that affects the quality of life (Mongelli, 1990). "Normal" life of an individual cannot be considered only as a static state that is, either as a dynamic equilibrium, but is also a result of a continuous series of changes resulting from the conditions, where the individual is in constant struggle to adapt physical environmental changes, and socio-cultural understanding as a way to establish more efficient and more self-realizing, because mental state is not a state of lack of conflict and tension, but the ability to manage internal conflicts and external; where the mind, like the body, tries to find new ways to adapt more efficiently (Borsellino, 1998; Havelka, Lucani & Lucani, 2009).

The progress that has known health psychology has created new models of faith thinking about health and disease. This is apparent by the way the biopsychosocial model saw health and disease as the product of a combination of biological factors (e.g predispositions, genetic), behavioral factors (e.g lifestyle, stressful situations, beliefs and health attitudes), social context (e.g cultural impacts, family relations, social etc.). The global recognition of the notion positively affects health but above all it has a very positive impact on the policy-making bodies or public health institutions themselves. Knowledge in this field is related to the fact that people can reduce the likelihood of having serious health problems, it can reduce costs to care for the disease. The effectiveness of policy-making can be seen earlier if they can suggest program modification or change and prevention through interventions and psychosocial programs, Information Communication and Educational programs to change the beliefs and of course healthy behaviors, and thus the economic cost would be lower because of the fact that promotion, information, education can increase the level of education and reduce the level of harmful health behaviors and related diseases. Diseases related to lifestyle and health damaging behaviors have increased in recent years, according to data from INSTAT, in recent years there has been a huge increase in the prevalence and incidence of diseases directly related to the quality of life style, behavior and health beliefs (INSTAT, 2010). Studies in Health Psychology show that lack of physical activity, smoking, unhealthy diets, unprotected sexual relations are unhealthy behaviors that affect the quality of life and

health (World Health Organization (WHO, 2009). By returning again to the importance of this biopsychosocial model even though dates back to the 20th century, in the present is pretty current and has become universal, being accepted and approved by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2002). By the fact that individual health behaviour can be one of the main causes for the quality of health, psychosocial model takes this element to treat with a great advantage. Health behaviors were the actions taken by the individual to maintain, control health or prevent a disease. Health behaviours are defined in different ways by different researchers. KASL and Cobb (1966) define health behavior as a deliberate action that the individual takes to detect, prevent, improve and ensure prosperity. Gochman (1997) defines health behaviors like (modeling behavior) as actions influencing skills to maintain and improve health. (Rosenstock (1974) proposes that health behavior is a deliberate behavior to prevent a disease (health belief model, HBM). Further health behaviors are defined and Matarazzo (1980) which among others includes, customs, and health damaging behaviors which he defines as pathogenic behavior (SP) (eg, smoking, and eating fats ). He also mentioned health protective behaviors which he defines as immunogenic behavior (SI) (implementation of health checks). Behaviors that can have a positive effect (SI) may be behaviors such as brushing teeth, putting the seat belt, the search for health information, the realization of regular health checks, check-ups, regular hours night sleep, healthy eating etc. Health behavior also affects the quality of life of individuals by delaying the onset of chronic diseases and increasing quality of life active. Smoking, alcohol consumption, maintaining extreme diets, lack of services and primary control etc. are important determinants of poor health (Lichtenberg, 2003). Also Doll and Peto (1981) suggested that around 50% of deaths occurring among the 10 leading causes related to mortality, are due to behavior. They also valued that 30% of cancer deaths came from the consumption of tobacco, alcohol 3%, 35% of the diets, 7% from sexual behavior. In the UK 90% of deaths from lung cancer were attributed to smoking, where smoking is also linked with other diseases such as cancer of the bladder, pancreas, mouth, throat and esophagus but also with coronary heart disease (McKeown, 1838-1970). Recent studies also show that the number of deaths may be related to some risky behaviors (Kvaavik, Batty, Ursi, Huxley, Gale, 2010; Pryda, Kannel, 2010, Bellis, Hughes, Leckenby, Hardcastle, Perkins & Lowey, 2014).

Psychologists help the individual to function more healthy. In many countries there is a great demand to have psychologists at institutions, mostly psychologists that are specialized in the field of health (Walsh, McDermott, 2003). The importance and need for the presence of psychologists to medical centers is also related to the fact as they may be able to cooperate very effectively with a multidisciplinary team, working in this way together with other health professionals (doctors, nurses, social workers, etc.), planning together with them the most effective ways to treat patients, but at the same time psychologist can help health workers themselves to be more relaxed and develop a more efficient communication with patients, especially in situations where patient and patient's family members are frustrated due to illness (American Psychiatric Association (APA), 2010). In the following issue will be discussed specifically the role of psychologists in health care centers, creating in this way a clearer picture for this position and for the contribution that brings its role.

### **Health Psychologists and health care, Integrated Health Care**

Health psychologists are able to practice a wide range of skills in health care delivery. This wide range of abilities comes as a result of subsequently continued individual expansion and unique knowledge of psychologists for professional growth as a necessity for the welfare of the individual's health in particular but also to society. Participation or integration of the role

of psychologists in health care institutions is a very important link in building a multidisciplinary group.

- Multidiscipline group which includes psychologist, enables the determination of a diagnosis where are considered physical, psychological and social aspects of the patient's illness. This way the service contributes to achieving a "triple aim" in health care institution while improving quality of care and reducing costs.
- Psychologist participation in this group also increases the level of communication and cooperation between staff as a necessity for effective work performance, but also the cooperation affects the implementation of a comprehensive plan to address the needs of the patient who receives health care.
- Multidisciplinary health care team may consist of (e.g, physicians, psychologists, nurses, physician assistants, social workers, and physical therapists) it is depending on the needs that one patient may have. One such group enables the patient to take effectively all the necessary treatment and above all he can be motivated and encouraged to heal his/herself (the researchers say that those patients who believe in the physician workforce and other team members are likely to recover more quickly, it is because they assist on helping themselves (self care), by accurately following the doctor's advice) (Williams, Weinman, Dale, 1995; Khaild, Abdulranlman , 2003; Heller, Kotrlová, Sobotková, 2012).
- The presence of a psychologist and its effective cooperation with the group, has an positive impact in moderating the diagnosis of the patient, affects the deadline for the treatment, also reducea the likelihood of the patient to experience high levels of anxiety and stress and above all can help in preventing the symptoms of depression (Brehms, 2008).

This kind of service that gives a great advantage and the role of psychologist, which may be included in various fields, will be listed below.

### **Primary Care**

The role of psychologists in primary care is immediate identification of problems and definition of diagnosis, in promoting healthy behaviors in order to prevent dangerous diseases (APA, 1998; Karlin, Duffy, 2004; Zeiss, Karl, 2008).

### **Secondary Care**

The role of the psychologist in secondary care consists in providing psychological assessments and diagnosis, type of psychological treatment, and the decision to rehabilitate. This service can benefit various age groups and with different needs ranging from light to needs of individuals between groups with specific needs (individuals with disabilities, individuals with brain injuries, etc.) (Bradley et al., 1994; Resnick , Rozensky, 1996).

### **Tertiary Care**

Psychologist as a member of this working group is very important, since the working group itself in this service covers severe cases, where help consists in relieving psychological suffering for those patients who suffer from life-threatening diseases as (cancer ), chronic diseases (renal diseases, etc.). Many interventions that focus on the behavior of this group of patients are used to manage pain (Kerns, Turk, Holzman, & Rudy, 1986; dath, Dong, Stewart, Sables, 2014).

## **The role of the psychologist in hospital and other medical centers (ambulatory)**

Psychological services in hospitals are provided by a certain protocol, which specifically states that which service can be provided. Psychologist in health centers and the hospital can work independently or can be part of a continuum of multidisciplinary team. The support provided by the work of the psychologist helps increasing the quality of work of the staff and in improving the quality of life of patients. According to qualification, psychologist can be divided and cover certain wards or health centers. Clinical psychologists can provide their service centers Mental Health (Psychiatry), but may not necessarily work in these centers, however, other centers can be recovered from the other psychologists also, by the fact that the psychologist focuses his work on providing psychological support, taking into account the elements of physical health (SOONS, Denollet, 2009). In all services psychologist can and it is necessary to cooperate with the multidisciplinary team, as well as the patient's family, where all the time he takes notes documented in psycho-clinical form for each case (patient). Psychologists offer their services and health clinic in hospitals and in small health centers, this for patients who can function independently and for those patients who do not function independently and are in constant readiness every day wait and young patients who need support and counseling (Bodiwala, 2007). According to the American Association of Psychology (2014), a psychologist at an health center can perform the following tasks: the implementation of the assessment and diagnosis, intervention and treatment needed, consultation with other professionals, drafting of specific programs in accordance with needs, supervision , and contribute scientifically to the area where he works (APA, 2008; Gruy, 2010; Oxman, Dietrich, 2005).

### **Psychological evaluation and determination of diagnosis**

A psychological evaluation is the assessment of individual thoughts and behaviour. Evaluation itself can include interviews, surveys, tests. The assessment covers many areas and skills, such as the overall assessment of intellectual, language, memory and learning, problem solving, planning and organizing their fine motor skills, visual and spatial skills, as well as academic skills (reading , math, spelling and writing). The assessment also includes a review of the individual's behavior and emotions. To achieve a more efficient evaluation and correct these skills, psychologists use standardized psychometric tests to assess in general level of intelligence, personality traits, also the level of motivation, trends, and health behavior (Goldstein, Beers , 2004; Mueser, Rosenberg, Michelle, Fox, Ford, Carty, 2001).

### **Treatment**

Setting the type and method of treatment of a patient is one of the most important decision-making, for psychologists and health professionals. Psychologists can provide a wide variety of interventions for individuals, groups, couples and families. Often psychological condition it's not hard only for the patient, in most cases are the families of patients who experience a heavy psychological condition, so the psychologist must reside continuously in the institution in order to face and handle in time and efficiently psychological situations (Nezu, Lombardo, 2001; Edwards, Stern, Clarke, Ivbijaro, 2010).

### **Consultation**

Many psychologists can provide psychological consultation even for health professionals to schools, various organizations, etc. For example, a psychologist can help a physician to better



manage the situation with the patient, in those cases when it's created an uncomfortable situation of communication. A businessman can also consult with a psychologist to help him alleviate conflicts between workers or assist them in managing stress, or preparing with better organizational skills.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Health and welfare of society has turned into one of the very important issues worldwide. A good health is closely related to behavioral, biological and social factors. Biopsychosocial integration and the behavioral model is also a procedure that is being followed carefully by policy-makers to global health. The inclusion of such a method is difficult by the fact that medical institutions gives more importance to biomedical model, but this is a model that as quoted above, does not take into account social and psychological factors by seeing the individual only as a biological being.

Seeing the advantages that biopsychosocial model and its ease of application, the adoption as a model becomes necessary because this model is a comprehensive model that is very close to the needs and demands of society, to ensure the psychological well-being, qualitative health, and a more active lifestyle.

## CONCLUSION

The psychologist has been an important role in the early stages of its development as a profession. Initially the role of psychologists consisted of assessing and diagnosing psychological distress that may have an individual. The profession of psychologist has been a recognized profession who has developed being equipped in this way with techniques and methods that were in the spotlight for improving the mood of the individual, taking into consideration the social and cultural context where individual lives and extensive individual or a corporation. With increasing knowledge, psychologists have become better able to diagnose and assess more effectively a disorder or an emotional problem. Psychologists already have a great opportunity to provide their input as an expert on health care, also they already know very well the importance that may have a behavior-based intervention to improve self-care. This article aimed at describing and discussing the role of the psychologist (clinical, health, counseling) in providing health care in health centers. The main role consisted in the diagnosis, evaluation, therapy delivery based on Biopsychosocial model. Discussions during working of this article, may not be acceptable from all, this from the fact that different studies can support various models and theories from the biopsychosocial one. The psychologist role, mainly health psychologist, despite the continuous academic increase that knows, it is also necessary that field professionals specialize continuously with the emerging needs that a society knows, respecting and in conformity with the ethical principles of the code of conduct.

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