

BOOK REVIEW: FUNCTIONAL DISORDERS AND MEDICALLY UNEXPLAINED SYMPTOMS. ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT - BY PER FINK, MARIANNE ROSENDAL, EDITORS

Aarhus University Press, Aarhus, 2015

258 pages

ISBN 978-87-7124-851-7

Functional disorders are pathological conditions without any organic or biochemical cause. Therefore they are also called unexplained symptoms and represent the object of clinical practitioners, of psychiatrists and mainly of the psychosomaticians.

Per Fink is a leading personality of the European Psychosomatic Medicine and chairman of the European Psychosomatic meeting from 2012.

His interest in the approach of unexplained symptoms led him to create this book, together with other eight coworkers. The book is written by his staff from the dedicated Research Clinic for Functional Disorders and Psychosomatics of the Aarhus University Hospital.

The structure of this tome is the following:

Part I, called Introduction to functional disorders, has 8 chapters. This part covers the following topics: terminology; prevalence, including a chapter on the health services consumption; clinical presentation, including the classification of the symptoms, the physical, emotional and cognitive symptoms, also the explicit chapter "how to make a diagnosis". The following chapter, no. 4, is extensive and presents the classification of the patients with functional symptoms, presenting also the psychiatric entities, many included in the somatic symptom disorders. Differential diagnosis is also discussed at large.

The next chapters present in logical order the etiology and the biological basis. Chapter 7 is important

because is dedicated to the interaction between the doctor and the patients with functional disorders. The last chapter of the first part shows the patient's beliefs with respect to his/her symptoms.

Part II of the book is dedicated to therapy. Here the authors present in detail the treatment options and emphasize again the importance of the relationship between the healthcare provider and the patient. General conversation techniques are presented in a useful manner. The primary assessment and treatment are described according to the so-called TERM model. Including five steps, this strategy is practically presented and recommended to the readers.

Part III of the book is dedicated to the follow-up treatment, which should be adapted according to the severity.

Last part, no. IV, comprises recommendations for pediatricians dealing with children having functional symptoms, and also chapters on the cultural approach and on the historic medical background of these conditions.

The book includes also nine appendixes for practical use.

An extensive and updated references list shows the serious literature search undertaken by the authors.

The book is well written and very useful for all specialists and trainees in psychosomatic medicine.

Dan L. Dumitrascu