

UNDERSTANDING HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY AND ITS DIFFERENT SPECIALITIES

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ABOUT THE STUDY

The study of psychological and behavioural processes in health, sickness and healthcare is known as health psychology. The discipline seeks to comprehend how psychological, behavioural, and cultural variables influence physical health and sickness. Psychological variables can have a direct impact on health. Chronically occurring environmental stresses, for example, that influence the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis can be harmful to health in the long run. Behavioural variables might also have an impact on a person's health. Certain behaviours, for example, can impair smoking or excessive alcohol use or improve exercise health over time. A biopsychosocial approach is used by health psychologists. In other words, health psychologists believe that health is the result of not just biological processes such as a virus or tumour, but also psychological such as ideas and beliefs, behavioural such as habits, and social processes such as socioeconomic level and ethnicity.

Health psychologists can enhance health by working directly with individual patients or indirectly in large-scale public health programmes by studying psychological aspects that impact health and constructively using that knowledge. Furthermore, health psychologists can assist in training other healthcare professionals such as physicians and nurses to use the information created by the field while treating patients. Health psychologists operate in a range of contexts, including hospitals and clinics alongside other medical professionals, public health agencies working on largescale behaviour change and health promotion programmes, and universities and medical schools where they teach and do research.

Despite its origins in the discipline of clinical psychology, health psychology has evolved into four distinct divisions and one related field, Occupational Health Psychology (OHP). Clinical health psychology, public health psychology, community health psychology, and critical health psychology are the four divisions. Division 38 of the American Psychological Association (APA), the Division of Health Psychology of the British Psychological Society (BPS), the European Health Psychology Society, and the College of Health Psychologists of the Australian Psychological Society (APS) are professional organisations for the field of health psychology. The American Board of Professional Psychology offers advanced certification as a clinical health psychologist in the United States.

Clinical Health Psychology (CIHP)

CIHP is the application of scientific information from the study of health psychology to clinical concerns that may emerge across the health care spectrum. CIHP is one of the clinical and health psychologists' speciality practise areas. It also makes significant contributions to both the prevention-focused area of behavioural health and the treatment-focused field of behavioural medicine. Clinical practise comprises teaching, behaviour modification approaches, and psychotherapy. In certain countries, a clinical health psychologist can advance to the level of medical psychologist and gain prescription powers.

Public Health Psychology (PHP)

PHP is population-centric. One of the primary goals of PHP is to look into potential causal linkages between psychosocial variables and health at the population level. In order to promote improved public health, public health psychologists offer study findings to educators, policymakers, and health care professionals. PHP is related to various fields of public health such as epidemiology, nutrition, genetics, and biostatistics. Some PHP interventions are aimed at at-risk population groups

Community Health Psychology (CoHP)

CoHP looks at community issues that influence the health and well-being of people who reside in communities. CoHP also creates community-level initiatives to fight disease and enhance physical and mental health. The community is regularly approached as a partner in health-related actions and serves as the level of analysis.

Critical Health Psychology (CrHP)

CrHP is interested in power distribution and the effects of power disparities on health experience and behaviour, health care systems, and health policy. CrHP places a premium on social justice and the universal right to health for individuals of all races, genders, ages, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Health disparities are a major source of concern. The critical health psychologist is a change agent, not just an analyst or cataloger. The International Society of Critical Health Psychology is a pioneer in this field.

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