Somatic disorders, a functional dilemma – using a team based approach to a set of complex diagnoses.

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Treatment Strategies (Chun et al., 2016)

- Acknowledging relationship between psychological and physical symptoms
- Empathetic, consistent, multidisciplinary, long-term treatment plans for chronic cases
  - Various psychotherapies with comprehensive treatment of comorbid psychiatric conditions [See Husain, Browne & Chalder, 2007]
  - Consistent communication between all treating providers
- **Provide reassurance**: being heard and taken seriously; detailed history and comprehensive physical examination; validate child’s and family’s anxiety and fears about the patient’s physical symptoms
- **Communicate**: between the patient, family, and all caregivers; identifying common goals and outcomes; and introducing the idea of working on improving functioning and symptom management. Explore openness to the possibility that the symptoms may be psychologically related
  - Determining and using terms such as stress, temperament, anxiety, nerves, and other terms (use the patient and families own language)
- **Coordinate care**: Contacting and communicating with all involved care providers. Include a brief mental health screen (2-5 question screens) for every patient [See Gledhill & Elena Garralda, 2006 for more questionnaires/screens]

Resources

- American Psychological Association (www.apa.org): Psychology Help Center...Find a Psychologist
- Society of Pediatric Psychology (Division 54 of APA): http://societyofpediatricpsychology.org/
- Psychology Today (www.psychologytoday.com)

