

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)

Chun, T. H., Mace, S. E., Katz, E. R., & AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS Committee on Pediatric Emergency Medicine. (2016). Evaluation and management of children with acute mental health or behavioral problems. Part II: Recognition of clinically challenging mental health related conditions presenting with medical or uncertain symptoms. *Pediatrics*, 138(3), e1-e23. DOI: 10.1542/peds.2016-1573

Gledhill, J., & Elena Garralda, M. (2006). Functional symptoms and somatoform disorders in children and adolescents: the role of standardised measures in assessment. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 11(4), 208-214.

Husain, K., Browne, T., & Chalder, T. (2007). A review of psychological models and interventions for medically unexplained somatic symptoms in children. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 12(1), 2-7.