



# Evolution and Impact of Psychological Medicine: A Holistic Approach to Mental Health

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## Abstract

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of mental health and well-being. The field of psychological medicine has emerged as a vital branch of medicine that focuses on understanding, diagnosing, and treating mental disorders. With its holistic approach, psychological medicine integrates psychological, biological, and social factors to promote mental wellness and improve the lives of individuals facing mental health challenges. This article explores the evolution of psychological medicine, its significant contributions, and the transformative impact it has on individuals and society as a whole. Psychological medicine, also known as psychiatry or psychiatric medicine, is a specialized field of medicine that focuses on the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of mental disorders. It combines medical knowledge with psychological theories and interventions to address the complex nature of mental health conditions. This discussion aims to explore the importance of psychological medicine in the realm of mental healthcare, highlighting its contributions to diagnosis, treatment modalities, and the overall well-being of individuals.

**Keywords:** Evolution, Psychological, Medicine, Mental health

## INTRODUCTION

### Historical perspective

The roots of psychological medicine can be traced back to ancient civilizations, where mental disorders were often attributed to supernatural causes or moral failings. It was not until the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries that the field started to gain scientific recognition. Pioneers like Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Ivan Pavlov laid the groundwork for understanding the complexities of the human mind and behaviour, giving birth to psychoanalysis and behaviourism (Arreguin AMG et al., 2011).

### Evolution of psychological medicine

Over the decades, psychological medicine has evolved significantly, incorporating diverse therapeutic approaches and evidence-based practices. The advent of psychopharmacology revolutionized the treatment of

mental disorders, providing individuals with medications to address imbalances in brain chemistry. Today, a multidisciplinary approach is at the core of psychological medicine, which includes psychotherapy, pharmacotherapy, and various alternative treatments (Barkley EF et al., 2005).

### Holistic approach to mental health

Psychological medicine recognizes that mental health issues are influenced by a multitude of factors, including genetic predispositions, environmental stressors, social support networks, and personal experiences. This holistic approach seeks to address the individual as a whole, rather than focusing solely on symptom management. By considering the interplay of biological, psychological, and social elements, psychological medicine offers personalized and comprehensive care (Block CC et al., 2002).

### Diagnosis and assessment

Accurate diagnosis and assessment are crucial for effective

treatment planning in psychological medicine. Mental health professionals employ a range of diagnostic tools and assessments, such as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), psychological testing, and interviews. These evaluations help clinicians understand the underlying causes and individual needs, enabling them to tailor treatment plans accordingly (Duffy GG et al., 1986).

### **Therapeutic interventions**

Psychological medicine employs a wide range of therapeutic interventions to address mental health issues. Psychotherapy, also known as talk therapy, allows individuals to explore their thoughts, emotions, and behaviours in a safe and supportive environment. Different approaches, including Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT), and psychodynamic therapy, are used to target specific conditions and promote positive change (Duke NK et al., 2002).

Pharmacotherapy, or the use of medications, is often employed in conjunction with psychotherapy to manage symptoms and restore chemical imbalances in the brain. Psychopharmacology has made significant advancements, offering a range of medications to address conditions such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia. However, it is important to note that medication alone may not provide a complete solution and should be combined with other therapeutic interventions for optimal outcomes.

In recent years, alternative and complementary approaches have gained popularity within psychological medicine. Mindfulness-based practices, yoga, art therapy, and music therapy have shown promising results in improving mental well-being, enhancing self-awareness, and reducing stress levels. These integrative approaches cater to the individual's unique needs, preferences, and cultural backgrounds.

### **The transformative impact**

Psychological medicine has had a transformative impact on individuals and society as a whole. By recognizing mental health as an essential component of overall well-being, it helps reduce stigma and encourages individuals to seek help. Accessible mental health services and interventions have improved the quality of life for countless individuals, enabling them to lead productive and fulfilling lives (Fernsten L et al., 2007).

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Diagnosis and assessment**

Psychological medicine plays a crucial role in the accurate diagnosis and assessment of mental health disorders. Psychiatrists employ various techniques, including thorough clinical interviews, psychological tests, and observation, to gather comprehensive information about patients' symptoms, behaviours, and personal histories. This multidimensional approach enables them to make informed

diagnoses, distinguish between different disorders, and develop tailored treatment plans. Without the expertise of psychological medicine, misdiagnoses and inappropriate treatment interventions may occur, leading to potential harm to patients (Kaddoura M, 2008).

### **Psychopharmacology**

Psychiatric medication has revolutionized the field of mental healthcare, and psychological medicine is at the forefront of psychopharmacological advancements. Psychiatrists are trained to understand the complexities of the brain and its chemical imbalances that contribute to mental disorders. Through evidence-based prescribing practices, they can provide medications that target specific symptoms and improve patients' overall well-being. Collaborating with other healthcare professionals, psychiatrists monitor medication effectiveness, manage side effects, and ensure the optimal balance between medication and psychological therapies.

### **Psychotherapy and psychological interventions**

Psychotherapy, an essential component of psychological medicine, encompasses a range of therapeutic approaches tailored to address the diverse needs of individuals with mental health conditions. Psychiatrists, trained in various modalities such as cognitive-behavioural therapy, psychodynamic therapy, and family therapy, employ these techniques to facilitate the healing and growth process. By utilizing psychotherapy, psychiatrists can help patients gain insight into their emotions, develop coping strategies, and promote positive behavioural change. Psychological interventions empower individuals to take an active role in their recovery journey and enhance their overall quality of life (Ketch A, 2005).

### **Collaboration and holistic care**

Psychological medicine emphasizes a collaborative approach to mental health care. Psychiatrists work closely with other healthcare professionals, including psychologists, social workers, nurses, and primary care physicians, to provide holistic care to individuals. This interdisciplinary collaboration allows for comprehensive assessments, integrated treatment plans, and continuity of care. By fostering a team-based approach, psychological medicine promotes the integration of physical and mental health care, addressing the interconnectedness of these domains and enhancing patient outcomes (Kragler S et al., 2005).

## **CONCLUSION**

Psychological medicine is an indispensable aspect of mental health care, bridging the gap between medicine and psychology. Through accurate diagnosis, evidence-based pharmacological interventions, and a diverse range of psychotherapeutic approaches, psychiatrists contribute significantly to the well-being of individuals with mental

health disorders. By emphasizing collaboration and holistic care, psychological medicine promotes a comprehensive understanding of mental health, addressing not only the symptoms but also the underlying causes and psychosocial factors contributing to mental illness.

As we move forward, it is crucial to continue investing in the field of psychological medicine, fostering research and innovation that further refines our understanding of mental health conditions and their treatment. Additionally, destigmatizing mental illness and promoting accessible mental healthcare services are imperative to ensure that individuals in need can readily access the expertise of psychological medicine professionals (Lai MK et al., 2004).

By recognizing the value of psychological medicine and integrating it into our healthcare systems, we can strive towards a society that prioritizes mental well-being, empowers individuals to seek help, and supports them on their path to recovery.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None

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