

The psychosomatic approach and the problem of diagnosis

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This paper examines some of the characteristics and aims of the process of medical diagnosis and the problems posed by the seeming opposition between disease-centered and person-centered diagnosis. The latter was one of the basic tenets of the psychosomatic approach from its inception. Its application to medical practice, however, has been hindered by the lack of an appropriate theoretical framework which might help avoid the one-sidedness prevailing in the discourse of different medical specialties. The building up of an integrative medicine has proceeded on the basis of addition and not on the basis of organic development from a theory-derived set of principles. In order to circumvent the problems associated with such state of affairs, it is proposed that multi-axial systems of diagnosis, like the ones currently in use in psychiatry, be adopted. These should be improved and expanded in order to take into account additional dimensions and data sources not hitherto taken into consideration.