

# Somatoform disorders

MUDr. Adam Fiala  
Dept. of Psychiatry,  
Masaryk University, Brno

# Somatoform disorders

- Assume the form of somatic disorders
- Emotional factors predominate in the origin of physical symptoms
- Very common in general medical practice

# Somatoform disorders

- 1. Somatization disorder
- 2. Undifferentiated somatoform disorder
- 3. Hypochondriasis
- 4. Body dysmorphic disorder
- 5. Conversion disorder
- 6. Pain disorder

# Somatization disorder

- Multiple recurrent somatic complaints of several years' duration are not due to any physical disorder

# Somatization disorder

## -diagnostic criteria

- A. History of many physical complaints beginning before age 30 years
- B. Each of the following /these cannot be explained by general medical condition/
  - four pain symptoms                      -two gastrointestinal
  - one sexual                                      -one pseudoneurological
- C. The symptoms are not intentionally produced

# Undifferentiated somatoform disorder

- One or more somatic complaints of at least 6 months' duration that do not meet the criteria for somatization disorder

# Undifferentiated somatoform disorder - diagnostic criteria

- One or more physical complaints lasting at least six months causing distress or impairment
- Are not due to general medical condition or a drug substance etc.
- The symptom is not intentionally produced and better accounted for by another mental disorder

# Hypochondriasis

- Unfounded fears of having serious illness



# Hypochondriasis - diagnostic criteria

- Fears of having a serious disease persisting despite appropriate medical evaluation
- The fear is not of delusional intensity
- Cause impairment and distress
- Duration at least 6 months
- Not better accounted for by another mental disorder

# Body dysmorphic disorder

- Preoccupation with an imagined defect in appearance, which causes significant distress and is not better accounted for by another mental disorder

# Conversion disorder

- Sudden, dramatic loss of physical functioning that has no known pathophysiological cause and appears to be a manifestation of a psychological need or conflict

# Conversion disorder - diagnostic criteria

- One or more symptoms suggesting a neurological or other general medical condition, preceded by conflict or other stressor
- The symptoms are not intentionally produced and cannot better accounted for by another mental disorder
- Causes distress or impairment

# Pain disorder

- Pain in the absence of adequate physical findings or pathophysiological explanations and in association with psychological factors that seem to play an etiological role

# Pain disorder - diagnostic criteria

- Pain in one or more anatomical sites causing clinical significant distress
- Psychological factors have an important role in the onset
- The symptom or deficit is not intentionally produced
- The pain is not better accounted for by a mood, anxiety or psychotic disorder

# Somatoform disorders - treatment

- Treatment is difficult, patients usually refuse to accept the possibility of psychological fundamentals.
- Usually are used either
  - pharmacotherapy /antidepressant, antianxiety medications/
  - psychotherapy /dynamic, exploration/
- Good working relationship between the psychiatrist and other physicians is required

# References:

- **Waldinger RJ.: Psychiatry for medical students, Washington, DC : American Psychaitric Press, 1997**
- **Kaplan HI, Sadock BJ, Grebb JA.: Kaplan and Sadock's synopsis of psychiatry, Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins, 1997**