

Medical Psychology: Clinical practices and implications for practitioners

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Psychologists have been working in Medical settings since the growth surge in the field following World War II. The Clinical Psychology profession growth escalated with the need and application of the newly designed empirical assessment and treatment interventions. The initial invitations in Medicine came to Psychologists from departments of Psychiatry. The recognition of the knowledge competencies (i.e., Brain & Behavior, Social Interactions, Learning, Memory, Perception) fundamental to the training of doctoral level Clinical Psychologists expanded Veteran's Administration service first, then, medical specialties of Neurology and Physical Medicine. The integrated knowledge and skills of the Psychologist to design, implement and interpret research investigations of patients' behavior fortified the flourishing of Psychologists in general hospital settings. This trend of the recent twenty-five years growth of utilizing Psychologists in healthcare is due to the increasing complexity of health care. In fact, the core competencies of Psychology doctoral training include many areas congruent to medicine. They are: scientifically minded practice, intervention skills, consultation and interpersonal collaborations, supervision and professional development. Also, according to the American Psychological Association, these specialized competencies are acquired last in the training following advanced knowledge and skills. The content mastery areas in Doctor of Philosophy training are: anatomy, pathophysiology, clinical pharmacology, social and psychological bases of disease, neuroscience/neuroanatomical/neuropsychological testing, healthcare policies and organization. The practice of these knowledge and skills areas are translated much like a research plan from literature to hypothesis with the parallel being precipitant factors to disease and target behavior for intervention. This presentation will expand on the role and current practice of Medical Psychology.

Biography

Kathy Sexton-Radek, Ph.D., C.BSM has been a Full Professor at Elmhurst College, Psychology Department since 1988. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses, prepared new course designs, consults to other Psychology departments for program evaluation and major assessment issues, participates in committee work and engages in service work. Dr. Sexton-Radek is an Adjunct Professor in the Clinical Psychology department of The Chicago School for the last ten years.

She received her Doctorate of Philosophy degree from the Illinois Institute of Technology in 1989 and interned at Rush Medical University 1988-1989 in Sleep Medicine, Behavioral Medicine, Geriatric Psychology and Health Psychology rotations. Dr. Sexton-Radek received her board certification in Behavioral Sleep Medicine (C.BSM). She completed a two year Post-Doctorate certificate program in Clinical Psychopharmacology which included a yearlong preceptorship with Psychiatry and Pulmonary medicine rotations.

Dr. Sexton-Radek is the author of numerous peer-reviewed, empirical articles, books, book chapters and National conference level presentations in the areas of Sleep Medicine, Health Psychology, Anti-violence interventions, Global perspectives on anti-violence programming, and computer applications in pedagogy. She is a member of the American Psychological Association, Sleep Research Society, American Academy of Sleep Medicine and Midwestern Psychological Association.

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