

Physical and Mental Health under Constant Interaction

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The human intellect attempted to attribute specific content to the term “health” and to define its limits, to make way and to configure methods and ways, both preventive and curative, for its preservation. This means that health was not engaged as a solely academic term, but as a matter of exceptional importance for the whole society and state. This notion was embraced by all eras: on the chart of commodities and values, health has always occupied a primary place, because but for it, it is not possible to enjoy any other inner or external assets. The preservation of health, therefore, is a principal goal, on which people must keep an eye without fail. Ergo, besides the obligation of every organized community, there is also the personal responsibility of each and every human to guard their health.

There has not always been a unified view concerning the term “health” and an attempt to define it ought to take into consideration - besides the psychological - the philosophical, spiritual-religious, moral and metaphysical notions. Ludwig Börne’s multi-faceted and multi-dimensional phrase “There are 1000 illnesses, but only one health” seems to be true [1]. According to the definition which was posited at the constitution of the World Health Organisation (WHO, 1946), health is “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” [2]. The sense of being healthy, of course, the euphoria and welfare are an entirely personal matter, as is the satisfaction which a healthy person feels when they join in “public affairs” as well as the fulfillment of all their duties and their social role. Because, through our communication with the others in order to either announce something or benefit both psychologically and practically, our mental abilities are activated [3].

If a human being is an undivided whole which - much like a coin - has two facets, the physical and the psychological, then the limits of health as a whole are highly inconspicuous. Unquestionably, however, the physical and the psychological health are deeply interconnected and they affect each other. Modern psychopathological views emphasize the great importance of the mental health and its beneficial or detrimental consequences on the health of the body. "Nowadays, this relationship is widely recognized and the general scientific understanding is characterized by the holistic notion that the body and the soul are considered to be a unified entity and that every illness can be affected by psychological factors. Something that is experienced as a psychological occurrence, such as the feeling of anger, is at the same time a biological occurrence. Similarly, biological occurrences such as the activation of the brain neurons are, at the same time experienced, as psychological occurrences. Consequently, the terms "psychological" and "organic-biological" are not mentioned as difference phenomena, but as different dimensions of the same phenomenon (Graham, 1967). The recognition of the interaction between soul and body in every illness has led to the foundation of the fields of behavioural medicine and health psychology, inter-scientific disciplines that engage in the investigation of psychological factors relevant to the cause and the cure of physical illnesses" [4]. While, physically, a human being may be absolutely healthy, psychologically the same person may be ill: their behaviour deviates from the ordinary, their reactions and manifestations are deemed to be disrupted and imbalanced, their fears are excessive and their actions when navigating daily problems are odd and spasmodic. To explain this situation, current research focus on the biological, the social and the personality factors, as shown in Hilgard's solid scientific documentation in his work *Introduction to Psychology* [5]. Furthermore, psychological illness significantly damages or altogether thwarts - in disabling it - a healthy person's right to their autonomous, social involvement and personal independence. This happens especially when the psychological illness begins early and strikes the young person before the end of their professional career or when the long duration or the constant relapses lead to the loss of their position at work and to social discrimination or to the absolute need of help and full dependence on others. Medicine and Psychology with their fields of expertise, which over the last 50 years have developed dramatically, have acquired a very difficult mission. "The therapy of the mentally ill is by no means a pleasant chapter of the Western civilization. As it was mentioned before, divergent behaviour was often mistook for criminal behaviour as well as heresy and treason" [6].

Human health, today, is threatened by the suffocating pressure of world range problems and the psychological overload has become a trial for people's resilience. The tension and the strain feed their anxiety; they feel a great psychological void; they experience painful and depressive situations; they are under constant restlessness and irritation and they are overcome by a distressing emotion of exhaustion, which very often leads to psycho-physical disorders: they are anxious and vexed by fear, they feel injured and locked in heavy isolation and alienation. The anxiety management comes to the aid of the preservation of a person's psychological and physical health and contributes to the foundation of an understanding for an optimum view of life on which their thoughts and expectations may be focused: for a long life of physical and mental efficiency, less hardship and free of pain, armed with the activation of psychological strength, cheerful temperament, high-spiritedness, welfare, communication with the others, satisfaction through their involvement in social affairs as well as the fulfillment of their duties and social role.

Towards a positive affirmation of life which reinforces our psychological stamina and against a desperate, stagnant view, which censors every inner delight and joy of life, we think that the short-term relief

from the stress and its durable permanent management are also found within our own self. Helen Keller voices a redemptive call in her book entitled, *The Open Door*: “When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us” [7]. High goals on the scale of values, such as freedom, independence, the sense of “we”, virtue, metaphysical hope, full awareness of accountability and responsibility, consistency, perseverance and an explicit orientation of purpose, also define our positive attitude towards people, incidents as well as ourselves. Then, we might be able to view our problems as a challenge. Effort, maximum self-activation, not “throwing in the towel” when confronted with obstacles, difficulties or misfortunes: the problems are here to be solved and the duties to be done [8]! After all, “The greatest of follies is to sacrifice health on the altar of livelihood and gain, advancement, erudition, glory, not to mention salacity and debauchery, or the fleeting sensual pleasures...A full, peaceful and happy life free of stress, an intellect unclouded, lively, penetrating and perceptive to the truth, a moderate and gentle will and therefore a clear conscience - these are privileges which no rank, no position, no wealth can make up for or replace” [9].

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