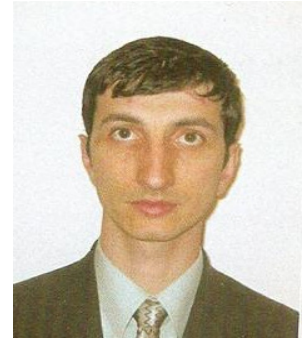


INTEGRATIVE PSYCHIATRY RELOADED

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*"Healing is the art and science of restoring wholeness and balance."
(D. Aftergood)*

Integrative psychiatry is considered a global developing movement that aims at the integration of complementary and alternative medicine into conventional psychiatry, based on scientific experiments regarding safety and effectiveness (Ernst, 1995).

Considering that the classical treatments used in psychiatry are constantly associated with various side effects/affects and low tolerability there are records of decrease patient compliance and it was stated that worldwide, almost half of the population uses complementary and alternative medicine annually, alone or in combination with Western classical medicine.

Generally, Integrative medicine and mental health are based on the fact that human body is a complex system formed by dynamically interacted biological, psychological, energetic and informational process and the main goals of integrative medicine are to establish the best therapeutic strategy for each patient considering the mentioned factors.

Therefore, the efforts towards health rehabilitation should take into account the integration of all aspects of well-being: physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, environmental and social. In this way, the integrative psychiatry focuses on combining conventional medication with various methods of psychotherapy, hypnosis, exercises, nutrition, botanical supplements, hormones, yoga, massage, reflexo-therapy, meditation, acupuncture, etc. These additional therapeutic methods are directed to the self healing potential of the patient, for instance by changing lifestyle or eating and exercise habits.

Lately, there is a growing concern in the practical integration of classical medicine and complementary and alternative medicine, although their paradigms and therapeutic approaches can be quite different. In this way, regardless of their differences, there are more and more scientific evidences that support the effectiveness of the alternative medicine in psychiatry. Moreover, there are also evidences suggesting that complementary and alternative medicine can lead to overall cost reduction (Sarnat & Winterstein, 2004).

Nonetheless, these aspects are extensively discussed in specialized conferences of Integrative Psychiatry, including those organized annually by Lentis, a scientific center dedicated to the integration of the conventional psychotherapeutic and psychopharmacologic treatments with complementary approaches. Also, in Iași, there is an annual conference in integrative psychiatry... In addition, in 2004, the American Psychiatric Association established a special Caucus on complementary, alternative and integrative approaches in mental health care. These aspects are also financially and logistically supported by the European Parliament and the World Health Organization.

However, despite the fact that the use of an integrative concept in psychiatry represents a promising avenue for the treatment of many neuropsychiatric diseases, future studies also need to carefully determine the exact place of the complementary and alternative medicine in psychiatry and how the interaction with the classical medicine affects the outcome of the treatment.