

Health Psychology

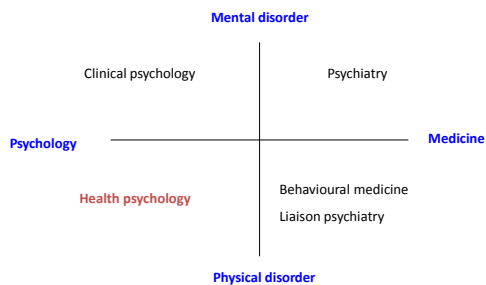
Dr. Catherine Darker

NIBPS & PSI
Joint Careers Event
Saturday 5th March 2011



What is HP?

- Involves an examination of the way in which biological, psychological, and social factors affect health and illness
- Both theoretical & applied



Kaptein and Weisman (2004)

What do Health Psychologists do?

- Use of psychological theories & interventions to:
 - prevent damaging behaviours (such as smoking, drug abuse, poor diet) & the change health-related behaviour in community and workplace settings
 - promoting and protecting positive health behaviours (such as exercise, healthy dietary choice, teeth brushing, health checks/self examination)
- Understanding of health-related cognitions
- Processes influencing health care delivery
 - the nature and effects of communication between health care practitioners and patients, including interventions to improve communication, facilitate adherence, prepare for stressful medical procedures etc
- Psychological aspects of illness
 - looking at the psychological impact of acute and chronic illness on individuals, families, and carers.
- Key part = application of these (individual *and* population level)



Becoming a Health Psychologist

- It is necessary to have a primary degree in psychology (recognised by BPS or PSI)
- Must complete a period of postgraduate training which will provide appropriate knowledge base and supervised practice

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Training as a Health Psychologist (Republic of Ireland)

Stage 1

- Postgraduate qualification (academic knowledge base)

Stage 2 (Currently in revision)

- (professional competence, research competence, competence in consultancy, teaching & training)



Training as a Health Psychologist (Northern Ireland & UK)

Stage 1

- postgraduate qualification (academic knowledge base)

Stage 2

- at least 2 years supervised practice (professional competence, research competence, competence in consultancy, teaching and training)

Chartered status

- follows a period of relevant training of no less than 3 years



MSc Courses leading to Stage 1

- Ireland – NUIG
- Northern Ireland – University of Ulster (distance learning)
- Britain for example:
London (City, Kings, Metropolitan, Middlesex, Thames Valley, UCL, Westminster), Birmingham (Aston), Coventry, Stoke (Staffordshire), Bath, Derby, Luton (Bedfordshire), Nottingham, Southampton, Guildford (Surrey), Brighton (Sussex), Middlesbrough (Teeside), Bristol (West of England), Edinburgh (Queen Margaret), Stirling



Health Psychology

- Knowledge base:
 - Lifespan perspectives and developmental processes
 - Health-related cognitions
 - Psychoneuroimmunology
 - Professional-patient communication
 - Personality, health and disease
 - Stress, illness and coping
 - Primary, secondary and tertiary prevention in the context of health-related behaviour



Doctoral & PhD

- Ireland
 - NUIG (structured PhD)
 - UU (Doctorate – 2012?)
- UK
 - (Doctoral courses in UK leading to Stage 2)
 - London (City, Institute of Psychiatry, UCL), Stoke (Staffordshire), Southampton, Surrey, Edinburgh (Queen Margaret)
- BPS Qualification in HP (independent route to Stage 2)
 - [http://www.bps.org.uk/careers/society_qual/qual_downloads/health_download\\$.cfm](http://www.bps.org.uk/careers/society_qual/qual_downloads/health_download$.cfm)



Journals of HP

- Leading journals include:
 - *Health Psychology*
 - *Journal of Health Psychology*
 - *British Journal of Health Psychology*
 - *Psychology and Health*



Working as a HP

- Often employed by academic institutions
- Work in clinical environments
 - (promoting self care behaviours among people with diabetes; promoting dietary behaviour among people in cardiac rehab)
- May also work in other areas: HSE; NHS; and voluntary agencies (e.g., Aids Help West)



2006 BPS survey of DHP members

- N = 256 (23%) responses
- 54% (N = 138) were currently working within the **university sector** and 29% in the NHS in secondary healthcare services and clinical (**direct patient contact**) posts.
- 6% (N = 15) were working in areas including the prison service, charities, the civil service, research councils and self-employment.



Resources

- http://www.psihq.ie/members_div_health.asp
(BPS DHP website)
- http://www.bps.org.uk/dhp/dhp_home.cfm
(BPS DHP website)



Any questions?

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