

## **Systemic approach to psychosomatic medicine: A report on Iran/Germany project**

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After many years of hearing and talking about biopsychosocial model and systemic approach to health and medicine in 2008, we encountered a vivid picture of such a clinical setting and medical education system in Psychosomatic Department of University of Freiburg. It was different from our routine psychiatry education and even additional roles of consultant-liaison psychiatry.

Having observed that using medication, CBT, psychodynamic and psychotherapy, mind-body control, family therapy on the basis of systemic approach could provide an integrative humanistic health system, was really astonishing for us.

Isfahan University of Medical Sciences (IUMS) in cooperation with Danesh-e Tandorosti Institute started a co-project under supervision and educational and scientific support of Psychosomatic Department of University of Freiburg from 2009. From that time till now, we have had many educational and research programs, clinical settings, publications, and even institute in Iran.

### **Common projects:**

- **Funds by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD):**

#### **Project 1: Globalization and Health – an Interdisciplinary Project of Cooperation between Germany and Iran**

The aim of this project was to develop and improve the existed cooperation and dialogue between Isfahan University of Medical Science and the Albert-Ludwigs University, Freiburg by focusing on an interdisciplinary cooperation project dealing with issues of globalization and health. In the suggested project, a transcultural and interdisciplinary dialogue and perspective was developed, in order to describe and compare socio-cultural factors of health and disease in the two countries, Iran and Germany. In particular, the project was focusing on sociocultural

aspects of the manifestation and treatment of psychiatric and psychosomatic disorders because in these conditions, social and cultural factors were most directly reflected. The dialogue was addressing to medical staff (doctors and medical students) as well as to other health related professions, such as clinical psychologists, social workers, etc. The project was to realize a reciprocal process of discussion of the participating institutions and staff members and to attain a maximum of sustainability. In order to guarantee sustainability, as one line of the project, a curriculum on psychosocial skills and psychosomatics was developed, which in the course of the project was adjusted to the Iranian culture and demands of medical treatment. A group of Iranian experts were involved in the discussion of the curriculum and trained to teach the curriculum in their own country.

Several meetings and workshops for educational purposes and research projects have been performed in context of research stays and summer schools in twin cities, Isfahan and Freiburg. More than 100 people including academic university members, general practitioners, psychotherapists, psychiatrists, medical and nursery staffs and psychiatry assistants took part in these programs.

### **Project 2: Improvement of the psychosocial care in primary medicine - a German-Iranian cooperation project**

The project was based on preliminary work that had been supported by the DAAD and carried out between 2010 and 2013 as part of a Higher Education Dialogue project of the Albert-Ludwigs-University of Freiburg and Isfahan University of Medical Sciences. In that project, a series of workshops on different aspects of culture-bound aspects of mental and psychosomatic illnesses had been held. Due to this project, there were very stable and sustainable cooperation structures. Overall, the project was aimed at the culture-specific adaptation and implementation of a curriculum for the improvement of the psychosocial care in primary care in Iran.

With considering holistic approach in medical care, psychosomatic research center arranged several clinics in different settings. Psycho-oncology clinic in Omid hospital, FGIDs and psychosomatic clinic in Khorshid Hospital are examples.

- **Training of trainers (TOT) of psychosomatic basic care**



Over the past 20 years, the Iranian government has put significant effort into the improvement of the psychosocial and mental care of the population through an integration of appropriate services into the primary care. A crucial measure in this context formed the project for Family Medicine in which the subject of mental health played an important role. In this proposed project, a training module for mental health was developed and implemented with the goal of being incorporated into the program for Family Medicine of the Iranian government. In collaboration with Iranian general practitioners, psychiatrists and psychotherapists, this curriculum was adapted taking special concerns of Iran into account. Among other things, the objective of the Family Medicine project was to offer an additional qualification for the large number of doctors who bore the main burden of medical care; a qualification that encouraged the work motivation and job satisfaction and one that improved the medical level of competence, and thereby the medical care. The proposed project aimed to contribute to the improvement and development of the curriculum in the context of the Family Medicine project of the Iranian government, especially in the field of psychosocial care.

Establishment of basic psychosomatic care in family medicine residency program started in 2016 and with coordination between community and family medicine department, Danesh-e Tandorosti institute and Psychosomatic Research Center, the first workshop was performed in IUMS.

- **Post doctorate program in psychosomatic medicine and psychotherapy**

From 2010 to 2013, Psychosomatic Research Center of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences cooperatively with Danesh-e Tandorosti Institute, and under supervision of Psychosomatic Department of Albert Ludwigs University of Freiburg, Germany, held level 1 training program “psychosomatic basic care” for a group of physicians and clinical psychologists. Having made required coordination with Freiburg University, localized level 2 syllabus “psychosomatic therapies”, and added some other clinical skills and materials, “research and educational postdoctoral program in psychosomatic medicine and psychotherapy” was developed to be executed and provide effective psychosomatic services in health system. Educational strategies of this course is a clinical skill training of 2-year period based on educational strategies for lecturing, workshop, mirror room, live interview, role playing, case discussions, case report, team work, group and individual training, Balint groups, reflecting teams, supervision and training in psychosomatic clinics.

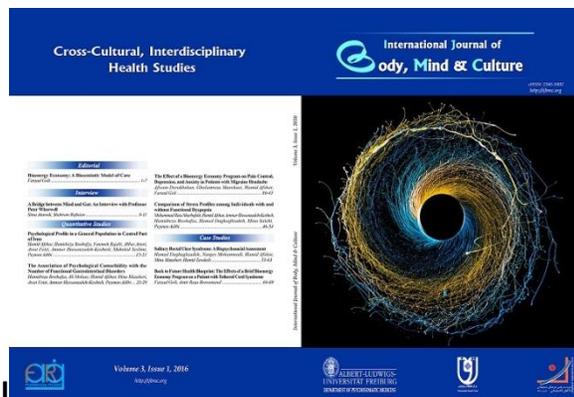
- **International Journal of Body, Mind, and Culture**

<http://ijbmc.org/index.php/ijbmc>

The IJBMC (International Journal of Body, Mind and Culture) is an international peer-reviewed interdisciplinary medical journal and a fully “online first” publication. Our publishing model— “continuous publication”— means that all articles appear on [ijbmc.org](http://ijbmc.org) before being included in an issue of the print journal.

The IJBMC’s mission is to engage and inform doctors, researchers, and other health professionals in ways that will design more humanistic health promotion and clinical settings. We aim to help health system managers and therapists to make more integrative decisions.

The IJBMC team is based mainly in Germany (Albert- Ludwigs- Universität Freiburg Department of Psychosomatic Medicine) and Iran (Danesh-e Tandorosti Institute and Psychosomatic Research Center of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences), although we have editors elsewhere in Europe, Canada, and in the US.



- **Publication**

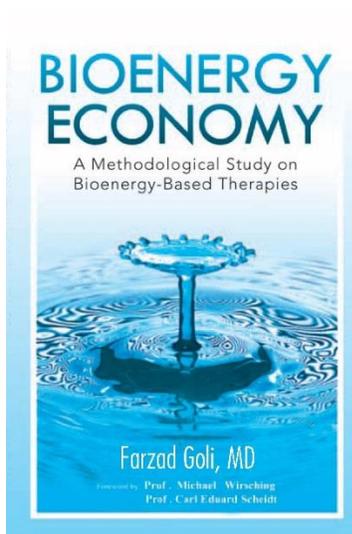
Danesh-e Tandorosti is the first institute which started publishing translated and affiliated books on psychosomatic medicine under the name of "Dehkadeh Salamat book series" from 2003. As the need for a specialized publication in this area was felt, DTI established Dehkadeh Salamat publication. The books are published cooperatively with Psychosomatic Research Center of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences. Some of the published books are as follow:

**Translated books:** Energy medicine: The scientific basis (Oschman), Lehrbuch der psychoanalytischen therapie: Grundlagen (Töma, Kächele), Lehrbuch der psychoanalytischen therapie: Praxis (Töma, Kächele), the placebo response and the power of unconscious healing (Kradin), Relaxation techniques: A practical handbook for the health cares (Payne), Mind-body medicine: Foundations and practical application (Rotan, Kammerer)

**Affiliated books in Persian:** Energetic approaches to health; Methodological & clinical bases of Reiki (Johari Fard, Abdollahi), Naught is naughting here (Goli), One bridge, thirty-three contemplations: From symbology to ontology of the imagination (Goli), Themes therapy: An essay on psychology and methodology of music therapy (Johari Fard), Time of witnessing: A report of the inner demography (Goli), An introduction to life-oriented medicine: Four essays on philosophy of medicine (Goli), Knowledge of consciousness evolution: Essays on transpersonal psychology (Goli).

- **International books**

**Bioenergy economy: A methodological study on bioenergy-based therapies**



Farzad Goli

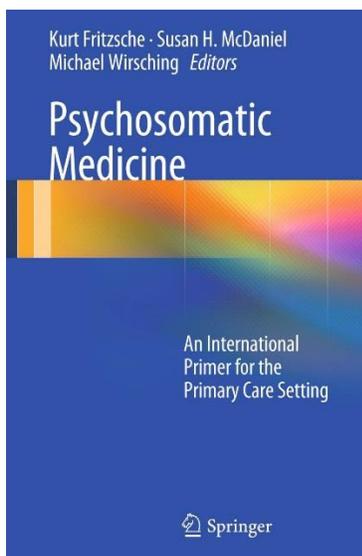
Foreword by prof. Michael Wirsching and Carl Eduard Scheidt

published by Xlibris in 2010

The book is used as the material for bioenergy economy course taught by Dr. Frazad Goli at Energy Medicine University, California, USA.

<http://energymedicineuniversity.org/faculty/goli.html>

### **Psychosomatic medicine: An international primer for the primary care setting**

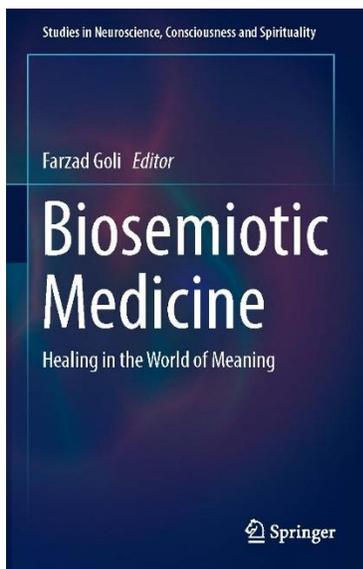


**Kurt Fritzsche, Susan H, McDaniel, Michael Wirsching (Eds.)**

**Published by Springer in 2014**

For preparing this book, psychosomatic experts from different countries of the world have contributed. From Iran, Dr. Farzad Goli and Dr. Afshar Zanjani (experts of the Danesh-e Tandorrosti Institute and Psychosomatic Research center of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences) contributed as the co-author of five chapters including Traditional medicine and psychosomatic medicine, Doctor-Patient Communication, Psycho-Oncology, Psycho-Cardiology, and Psychosomatic Medicine in Iran.

**Biosemiotic medicine: Healing in the world of meaning**



**Farzad Goli (Ed.)**

**Published by Springer in 2016**

This book – deals with basic concepts of biosemiotic medicine – is comprised of the collected articles written by experts from Iran, England, Germany, and Denmark.

**Other activities:**

- **Electronic Journal of Tan, Ravan, va Farhang**

<http://tanravanfarhang.ir/>

Danesh-e Tandorosti Institute published journals on interdisciplinary health and medicine – including Salamat-e Bartar [Higher Health] (from 2002 to 2007) – which is the first interdisciplinary journal of medicine in Iran – and Tan, Ravan va Farhang [Body, Mind, and culture] (from 2013 until 2016) in Persian. From 2016 until now the articles are published electronically. The articles can be retrieved from <http://tanravanfarhang.ir/>.

- **Therapeutic activities**

So far, DTI has provided individual, family, and group counseling and psychotherapy for more than 30000 people.

Treatment activities of the psychosomatic Research Center include psychiatric and psychological services in psychodermatology, psychocardiology, psychogastroenterology, psychosexual clinics.

**About the centers:**

**Albert-Ludwigs University of Freiburg:**

<http://www.uni-freiburg.de/universitaet-en>

<https://www.uniklinik-freiburg.de/asialinkvn009/project.html>

Since October 2010 the cities of Freiburg and Isfahan have established a town twinning project, which has led to numerous contacts on the administrative level and an intense cultural exchange between the partners. On 16th of October 2003 the Albert-Ludwigs University and the Isfahan University ratified a Memorandum of Understanding, a declaration of intent to cooperate in scientific research and in the training of human resources. Based on this MoU, former University Rector, Prof. Dr. Jäger, visited Isfahan University together with Dr. M. Salavati, the initiator of the town twinning project, in 2008 and ratified the cooperation between Freiburg University and the Isfahan University for Medical Sciences.

Following up on this MoU, Prof. Dr. med. Carl Eduard Scheidt was invited to take part in the 2nd International Conference for Psychosomatic Medicine in Isfahan in spring 2008. During this event the postgraduate curriculum in psychosomatic medicine and psychotherapy was introduced to the Iranian medical doctors and it was mutually decided to establish and adapt this curriculum to the Iranian context and needs. Based on these fruitful discussions and ideas a conjoint project proposal was developed and introduced to the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) for Funding. The consent for funding was given in 2009 and the first project phase of curriculum development and exchange of experiences started in January 2010.

## **Danesh-Tandorosti Institute (DTI)**

- Farzad Goli, MD (head of the institute)
- Fellowship in psychosomatic medicine
- Head of Danesh-e Tandorosti Institute
- Guest researcher at Albert Ludwigs University, Freiburg, Germany
- Faculty member of Energy Medicine University, USA
- Leader of postdoctoral program at Psychosomatic Research Center of Esfahan University of Medical Sciences under supervision of psychosomatic department of Albert Ludwigs University of Freiburg, Germany

<http://iranianhealth.com/>

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DTI has started its activities as a center for mind–body medicine and life skills education in 1995. DTI’s mission is to expand systemic approach and psychosomatic medicine in Iran and the region. Some activities of the institute are as follows: Providing individual, family, and group counseling and psychotherapy and offering personal development courses; holding individual and public transpersonal psychology workshops since 2001 in Iran, Turkey, and Germany; offering professional short-term and post-doctoral educational and research courses in psychosomatic medicine cooperatively with other universities; publishing journals on interdisciplinary health studies: Higher health and Journal of Tan, Ravan, va Farhanf in Persian (which has been published electronically from 2016), and International Journal of Body, Mind, & Culture cooperatively with Albert Ludwigs University; researching on and developing a program to regulate Iranian complementary and alternative medicine in the committee of health and Medicine of Isfahan Province and offering it to the health commission of Islamic parliament to be approved as Traditional, Complementary, and Alternative Medicine Office in the Ministry of Health; publishing book series of Dehkadeh Salamat on systemic approach to health; researching on, developing, and executing procedures to found an integrative psychosomatic health center, “Dehkadeh Salamat” cooperatively with Albert Ludwigs University of Freiburg and Ened; cooperation in conducting national and international research projects (globalization and mental health in Iran, Psychological medicine: An international primer for the primary care setting {published by Springer, 2014}, Psychosomatic basic care and family physician in Iran (since 2013), Biosemiotic Medicine; Healing in the World of Meaning {published by Springer, 2016}).

DTI is now establishing a branch in Tehran and is cooperating with Mashhad University of Medical Sciences and Ferdowsi University of Mashhad to establish a psychosomatic medicine clinic in Mashhad city and to support establishing a clinic in Afghanistan cooperatively with Psychosomatic Research Center of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences under supervision of Albert-Ludwigs University. These projects are planned to be coordinated by Dr. Amir Reza Boroumand, MD, neurologist, postdoctorate in psychosomatic medicine.

Besides, DTI is working on to establish a psychosomatic clinic in Kashan with the help of Professor Omid (one of the post-doctorate candidates).

### **Psychosomatic Research Center of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences**

- Hamid Afshar Zanjani, MD, psychiatrist (head of the institute)
- Fellowship in psychosomatic medicine
- Guest researcher at Albert Ludwig University, Freiburg, Germany
- Head of Psychosomatic Research Center, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences
- Associated Professor of psychiatry, Medical Faculty, Esfahan University of Medical Sciences
- Director of postdoctoral program at Psychosomatic Research Center of Esfahan University of Medical Sciences under supervision of Psychosomatic Department of Albert Ludwig's University of Freiburg

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Psychosomatic Research Center of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences started its activities in 2010, aiming at researching, promoting, and presenting latest approaches in psychosomatic medicine. Treatment, research, and educational activities are conducted by the center.

The most important fields of research activities are as follows: "Psychosomatic medicine which includes different functional disorders; somatic symptom disorders; psychological factors affecting medical conditions; Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry; burden of psychosomatic and functional disorders in general population; cultural and transcultural aspects of psychosomatic medicine; family medicine and involving family physicians in psychosomatic basic care; psycho-oncology". The educational activities are offering professional short-term courses for residents of Esfahan University of Medical sciences and post-doctoral educational and research courses in psychosomatic medicine cooperatively with Esfahan University of Medical sciences, and Albert

Ludwigs University. Treatment activities include psychiatric and psychological services in psychodermatology, psychocardiology, psychogastroenterology, psychosexual clinics. This center has published several articles about psychosomatic medicine, consultation liaison psychiatry, functional disorders and psychometrics, and several books on mental health and stress management in psychosomatics context. Psychological services comprise individual and group counseling and holding workshops for self-awareness, life skills, obsessive compulsive disorder and stress management for patients suffering from somatoform disorder, gastrointestinal functional disorders, headaches, and chronic pain.