

What is Psychosomatic Obstetrics and Gynecology (POG)?

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Objectives

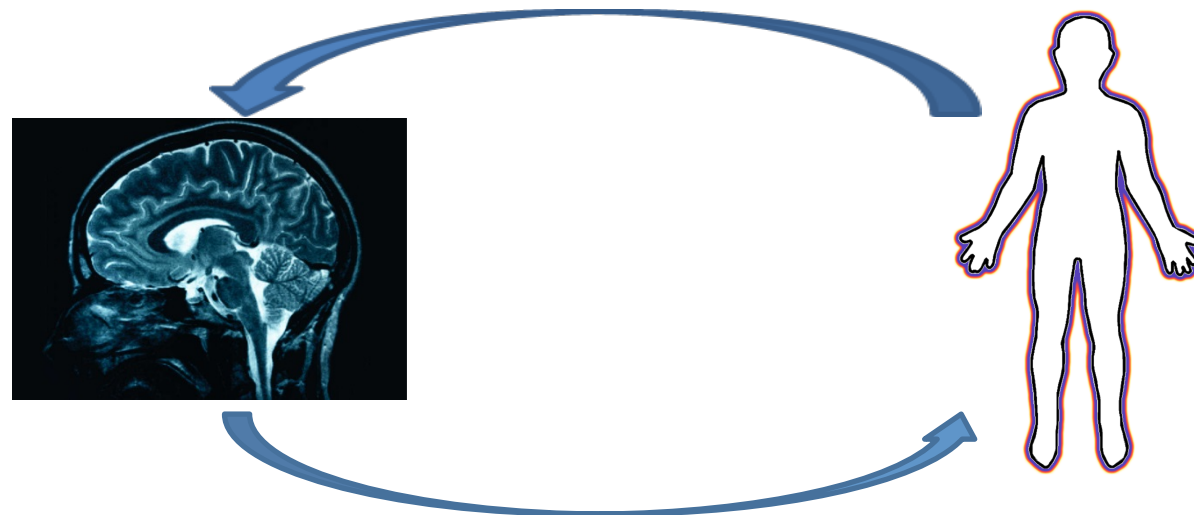
- Define “psychosomatic” and how it applies to women’s health
- Describe specific health issues that are characterized by mind/ body interaction

What is “Psychosomatic”?

“Psyche” = mind

“Soma” = body

Psychosomatic issues are those that involve an interaction between the mind and the body.





In women's health, there are many examples of such interactions:

- Situations where mental states influence the course or outcome of pregnancy or disease
- Situations where reproductive hormones influence mood and psychological conditions
- Societal and cultural influences that impact how women experience health and disease

Examples of psychology influencing health/ illness

- Childbirth
 - Prior traumatic birth induces anxiety/ fear that influences course of current pregnancy
- Infertility
 - Stress may impact normal reproductive function and lead to reduced fertility
- Psycho-oncology
 - Women with depression may recover more slowly from cancer surgery than women with normal mood

Examples of hormones that influence psychology

- Postpartum depression
 - Depression onset coincides with abrupt withdrawal of pregnancy hormones
- Premenstrual dysphoric disorder
 - Mood changes with fluctuations in menstrual hormones
- Sexual dysfunction
 - Some cases of decreased libido linked to hormonal deficiency

Examples of health-related issues that have strong association with mental well-being

- Pregnancy loss and prenatal genetic diagnoses
- Gynecological cancer
- Chronic pelvic pain

May all have major impact on mental health through unpleasant or adverse experiences

“POG” may also refer to
“psychosocial” ob/gyn

- Refers to the idea that disease and health should be interpreted and described as a combination of biological, psychological, and social influences

Examples of social problems that may affect women's health

- Interpersonal violence
- Poverty and access to care
- Substance abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Migration and displacement of refugees

Examples of health experiences impacted by cultural influences

- Pregnancy and Childbirth
 - Management varies from culture to culture
- Sexuality and sexual diversity
 - Behaviors influenced by social norms and cultural acceptance
- Body image and cosmetic gynecology
 - Perception of “normal” defined by social and cultural influences

POG is about interdisciplinary care!

- The intersection of mental and physical aspects of women's care involves sharing expertise between several fields:
 - Ob/gyns
 - Psychiatrists
 - Psychologists
 - Sociologists
 - Social workers
 - Midwives
 - Nurses
 - Genetics counselors

POG affects nearly every aspect of women's health care in some respect!

- Attention to psychological and social aspects of caring for women enhances the physician-patient relationship and improves the quality of caring



For further reading:

Paarlberg KM, van de Wiel HBM (eds). Bio-Psycho-Social Obstetrics and Gynecology: A Competency-Oriented Approach (2017): Springer.

