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## **CHAPTER 5.**

### **THE CHALLENGE OF PSYCHOSOMATIC MEDICINE**

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Different explanatory theories on the origin and maintenance of the psychosomatic affections exist. In spite of this, they are still scarcely used in the medical practice, which is focused on attending the signs. Even though some relevant psychological aspects are taken into account, like the perception of pain or stress, medical practice avoids delving into, or exploring the personality of the patient and their emotional history, as suggested by the different schools of psychoanalysis.

An investigation of the patient's personality would try to explore aspects such as alexithymia, or in other words, the inability to express emotional experiences due to a cognitive-emotional disturbance, preventing him or her from determining and expressing his or her emotions.

A trait that has a close relation with health, as it can be observed in patients with a high match to type C personality, who, due to an inability to express the experience of negative emotions, are more prone to suffer psychosomatic pathologies.

Also, people with a type C personality profile are submissive and compliant to the rules, underestimating their own desires and impulses to fulfill the ones of the others; similar to the concept of personality characterized by a repressive superego, hyperadapted to reality and with a tendency to nullify one's own emotions.

A special emphasis is on the contribution to communication through the body, at an early age, given by a lack of linguistic development; moving from the psychological to the physical, without any elaboration, the process is opposed to mentalization, hence the lack of representation of the condition.

Some authors have proposed that the doctor should become a researcher of the emotional history of the patient. Many of the necessary facts to understand the patient will be found in the way they relate, as well as the way they live and

express their emotions.

Moving on to follow-up work in the therapeutic process, this will include both the intervention on the signs and symptoms and on the personality structure that supports them. This way, the person learns to get acquainted with his or her desires and needs; moreover, him or her will know how to use the right tools to express desires and needs, as well as to satisfy them or to withstand frustration.