


English for Medical Students (L1/ S2).

Medical Psychology Module

 *Online Learning Course*

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Lesson 1: Introduction to Medical Psychology

1 Lesson Introduction

Medical psychology is a branch of psychology that studies **how thoughts, emotions, and behaviors influence health and illness**. Its goal is not only to understand diseases but also to explore **how the mind and emotions affect the human body**.

This lesson introduces students to **basic concepts of medical psychology** and explains the relationship between **mind and body**. It also provides practical examples to make the concepts easier to understand.

2 Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

1. Define **medical psychology** clearly and simply.
2. Explain the connection between **mind and body**.
3. Identify **psychological factors** that affect health.
4. Give practical examples of how **stress, emotions, and behavior** can influence patients.

3 Key Concepts and Definitions

Term	Definition	Example
Psychology	The scientific study of the mind and behavior	How do your feelings affect your daily actions?
Medical Psychology	The application of psychology to health and disease	A patient feels anxious before surgery → blood pressure rises
Stress	A physical and mental response to pressure or challenges	Fear before an exam → faster heartbeat
Emotion	Feelings such as fear, happiness, or sadness	A patient's fear affects recovery speed
Behavior	How a person acts or responds	A patient avoids exercise because of pain fear
Patient	Someone receiving medical care	A patient waiting to see the doctor

4 Lesson Content

a) Definition of Medical Psychology

Medical psychology studies **how mental and emotional states affect health**.

- **Example 1:** A patient stressed before surgery may experience **insomnia or nausea**.
- **Example 2:** Patients who maintain a **positive attitude** during illness often recover faster.

Demonstration idea: Imagine a stressful situation (like taking an exam) – notice the **physical signs of stress:** tense muscles, faster heartbeat. This illustrates the **mind-body connection**.

b) Biopsychosocial Model

Health is **multi-dimensional**:

1. **Biological** → body, illness, genetics
2. **Psychological** → mind, stress, emotions, coping
3. **Social** → environment, family, friends

Example:

A student fails an exam:

- Psychological → feels stressed
- Biological → develops a headache
- Social → avoids friends

c) Importance of Medical Psychology

Doctors treat **patients, not just diseases**.

- **Example:** Two patients with the same illness:
 - Patient A: anxious and unsupported → slower recovery
 - Patient B: calm and supported → faster recovery

Psychological factors like **stress, anxiety, or negative emotions** directly affect **healing, treatment compliance, and quality of life**.

5 Practical Examples

1. **Stress before surgery or exams:**
Can cause fast heartbeat, insomnia, and reduced immunity.
2. **Positive attitude and support:**
Patients with emotional support recover faster.
3. **Avoiding harmful behaviors:**
Avoiding exercise due to fear can weaken health and slow recovery.

6 Conclusion

Medical psychology is the **bridge between mind and body**. Understanding this relationship helps students:

- Provide **holistic care** to patients
- Recognize signs of **stress or anxiety**
- Improve **treatment outcomes** by considering psychological factors

7 Suggested Exercises for Students

1. Write a short paragraph (5–7 lines):
“Why is medical psychology important for doctors?”
2. List two practical examples of **how stress or emotions affect the body**.