Treating somatic symptoms in youth: collaborative care, evidence-based assessment and intervention, and school consultation

Overall summary and relevance to conference theme:
Pediatric psychologists are frequently consulted to help manage somatic symptoms occurring as part of an identified medical condition or as medically unexplained physical symptoms. Subspecialties most likely to serve this population include neurology (e.g., psychogenic non-epileptic spells), gastroenterology (e.g., functional gastrointestinal disorders), cardiology (e.g., non-cardiac chest pain, syncope), anesthesiology (e.g., chronic pain syndromes), rheumatology (e.g., fibromyalgia), rehabilitation (e.g., functional neurological symptoms), and primary care (e.g., abdominal pain, headaches). Somatic symptoms can cause significant impairment in physical, interpersonal, and academic functioning, and can be associated with psychological comorbidities. Effective treatment for these patients is multidisciplinary and multifactorial; however, there is little formal training available on somatic symptom intervention in the field of pediatric psychology, despite being a common referral concern. This workshop will address this gap, providing innovative and practical training for pediatric psychologists to enhance their treatment of youth with somatic symptoms to improve functional outcomes. The workshop will provide specialized training in 1) assessing somatic symptoms, 2) collaborating with medical colleagues, 3) providing psychoeducation to families, 4) tailoring cognitive behavioral interventions, and 5) developing behavioral plans for school. Teaching strategies will include didactics, case examples, active skills training (e.g., role playing), and round table discussions during which presenters will split up to facilitate in depth, small group discussions. Participants will also be provided with materials for use in their clinical practice.

Based on the content of this talk, participants will be able to:
1. List the most common medical specialties to encounter somatic symptoms and the most common somatic symptom presentations
2. Assess for somatic symptoms and distinguish between somatic symptoms and factitious disorders/malingering versus primary psychological disorders
3. Utilize assessment data to develop multidisciplinary case conceptualizations and treatment plans with medical colleagues
4. Describe somatic symptoms from a biopsychosocial framework and provide psychoeducation to patients and families
5. Provide evidence-based interventions to improve coping with somatic symptoms and reduce functional impairment at home and in school

Target Learner Level: Intermediate
Registration cap: 50 participants

Presenters: Katherine Junger, PhD, Sarah Williams, PhD, Nicole Zahka, PhD, Kari Baber, PhD, Kindell Schoffner, PsyD

Drs. Katherine Junger, Sara Williams, Nicole Zahka (Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center), Kari Baber (Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia), and Kindell Schoffner (Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta) have combined expertise in treating a wide range of somatic symptoms in inpatient, rehabilitative, outpatient, hospital-based, and community-based settings. Presenters work alongside medical colleagues in neurology, cardiology, anesthesiology, rheumatology, rehabilitative medicine, and gastroenterology to preserve/restore function and remediate psychological comorbidities in youth with somatic symptoms. In addition, Drs. Williams and Zahka
wrote the book Treating Somatic Symptoms in Children and Adolescents. Dr. Williams and Baber conduct research on somatic symptoms in different pediatric populations (pain, GI).

**COI Statement:** Drs. Zahka and Williams are Guilford authors and collect royalties.

**Session Date/Time:** Thursday, April 5th, 2018; 8:00-10:30 AM

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