Psycho-physiological Disorders
B.A. -III (Hons)

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Meaning and Definition —
Psycho-physiological disorder is also known as psychosomatic disorder. Psycho-physiological disorder is mainly caused by psychological and emotional rather than by physical and organic. In other words psychological problems are expressed through some physiological pathology. According to Alexender (1950) – each type of psychosomatic disorder may be connected with specific type of stress. It was found that peptic ulcer associated with the frustration of love need and the need for protection. Frustration of these need cause anger and anxiety which stimulates secretion of acid in stomach. This leads to peptic ulcer.

DSM II defines the psycho-physiologic disorder as – "characterized by physical symptoms that are caused by emotional factors and involve a single organ system usually under autonomic nervous system." (American Psychiatric Association 1968).

Psycho-physiologic disorder include a wide range of dysfunction in which strain and stress of life plays a crucial role.

Classification of Psycho-physiologic Disorders :
1. Psycho-physiologic cardiovascular disorders: hypertension, coronary, disease, migraine etc.

2. Psycho-physiologic gastrointestinal disorders: it includes- peptic ulcer, colitis, gastritis etc.
3. **Psycho-physiologic respiratory disorders**: it includes bronchial asthma, tuberculosis, common cold etc.

4. **Psycho-physiologic skin disorders**: includes neurodermatosis, eczema, itching etc.

5. **Psycho-physiologic genitourinary disorders**: disturbances in menstruation and urination.

6. **Psycho-physiologic endocrine disorders**: hyperthyroidism, obesity, endocrine disorder.

7. **Psycho-physiologic musculoskeletal disorders**: headache, case of arthritis, muscle cramps etc.

8. **Psycho-physiologic disorders of organs of special sense**: chronic conjunctivitis.

9. **Psycho-physiologic hemic and lymphatic disorders**: disturbances in the blood and lymphatic system.

10. **Psycho-physiologic disorders of other types**: disturbances in the nervous system in which emotional factors play a crucial role - multiple sclerosis.

**Psycho-physiologic Cardiovascular Disorders**

**Coronary Heart Disease**: This disorder is the outcome of emotional stress. Coronary heart disease and hypertension or high blood pressure are the two most important type of frequently occurred heart disease. It is observed that worry, anxiety, irritation and excitement increase heart palpitation. It resist the flow of blood and also increase clotting of blood which causes obstruction to arteries.
**Psycho-physiologic Gastrointestinal Disorders**

**Peptic Ulcer:** The gastrointestinal system is a common path through which human beings express their emotion. People experience pain in upper abdomen along with the symptoms of nausea and vomiting. Chronic repressed hostility, worry, anxiety, constant resentment and anguish and other stressful states stimulate the flow of stomachs acid and juices. This gastric secretions destroys the lining of the stomach is called duodenum and leaves a crater like wound called ulcer.

**Psycho-physiologic Respiratory Disorders**

**Asthma:** It is a quite common respiratory disorder. Asthma is found to be elevated by emotional stimuli. It was observed that most of the times asthmatic attack not due to particular allergens rather it seemed to be directly related to difficulty in handling aggression and hostility aroused out of interpersonal relationship.

**Psycho-physiologic Skin Disorders**

**Eczema:** It is a superficial inflammation of the skin characterized by redness, itching and formation of crusts. As the skin is highly sensitive indication of emotional stress. Severe stress and emotional distress also may develop psychosomatic skin reactions such as rashes, eczema. Brown (1972) stated a positive relationship between eczema and emotional stress. It was also proved that eczema reactions related with emotional stress clear up when the stress situation alleviated.

**Psycho-physiologic Genital Disorders**

**Urinary Problem:** Disorders in the urinary functions due to emotional conflicts come under this category. Many people complaint of frequent urination or other urinary troubles though there is no real organic pathology.
It is also caused due to worries, anxiety and emotional stresses. Bed wetting is a common behaviour disorders during childhood is caused by this disorder.

**Etiology of Psycho-physiological Disorders :**

A. **Biological Factors**

1. **Genetic Factors :** It was observed that to some extent specific genetic factors are responsible for this disorder- Asthma, ulcers, migraine and hypertension in greater frequencies have been reported in close relatives of the patients.

2. **Differences in autonomic reactivity :** This disorder is the outcome of individuals primary reaction tendencies to stress- different children reacts differently to some stress by developing specific types of physiological disorder like fever, indigestion, sleep disturbances etc.

3. **Somatic Weakness :** Some studies stated that psychosomatic disorders occur specially in the weak of interior organ of the body which is produced usually due to heredity, illness and trauma.

B. **Psychosocial Factors**

i. **Personality Factors :** Individuals attitude towards stressful situation and the coping pattern which he adopts are the reason in the development of psycho-physiological disorders. Though personality factors are not solely accountable for the total cause of psycho-physiological disorders.

ii. **Interpersonal relationship :** Some studies indicate the relationship between pathogenic family pattern to psychophysical illness. Marital unhappiness, separation, divorce, death of near
one's, and other stressful interpersonal relationship may influence psychophysical logical disorders.

C. **Socio-cultural Factors**

Psycho-physiologic disorders may vary in incidence from culture to culture and society to society. It was observed that psychosomatic disorders are rarely found in primitive people but with the time of modernization it is frequently occurred in developed societies. Some have the idea that Socio-Economic Statues (SES) may be a reason behind this disorder.

**Treatment:**

i. Use of tranquilizers for reducing emotional tension.

ii. Behaviour therapy

iii. Family Therapy

The various treatment methods should be applied as and when necessary, keeping in view the nature of the disease and condition of patient.