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IS THE DISABILITY CONCEPT INFLUENCING TREATMENT DECISIONS?

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Worldwide psychiatrists are trained to assess symptoms, diagnose illnesses and treat patients on the basis of these information. Such a symptom-centred concept consequently leads to a focus on the illness itself and disregards other aspects of these illnesses. Patients themselves focus much more on the functional consequences of their illness. They complain about what they cannot do any more because of their illness, i.e. fulfilling their roles as partners, in their families, in their profession and in society. To close the gap between professionals and their patients it would be useful to use a common illness concept. Such an illness concept is provided by the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). The ICF does not only allows to classify the deficits caused by the illness but also takes the resources of the affected persons into account. Then the patient as a whole interacts with her or his environment. This modern disability concept is not static but dynamic. It does not only depend on the patient him- or herself but also on the ways how the environment interacts with the affected person. Such a dynamic approach would be very useful in order to reconcile lay- and professional disease concepts and provide a better platform for cooperation.