



## AN INTRODUCTION TO IPM TRAINING

### Help!

**My patient has a problem with sex....**

**I feel hot under the collar, and I don't know where to start....**

**I have 10 minutes, the patient has already taken up half of that time and now they say why they are here - a sexual problem....**

**My patient experiences pain with sexual activity....**

**My young, handsome, macho patient is really embarrassed - he ejaculates too soon....**

**I am faced with a couple that desperately want a child but nothing is happening despite all their tests being normal....**

**Has this ever been you?**

**If you thought you enjoyed the challenges of medicine before, join an IPM seminar group and you will never be the same again.**

### WHAT IS PSYCHOSEXUAL MEDICINE?

Psychosexual Medicine is psychosomatic medicine applied to sexual disorders. It offers a type of brief therapy, based on psychoanalytic skills. It is a unique practice that helps to understand how emotional factors, not always experienced at a conscious level, can interfere with sexual performance and enjoyment.

The underlying cause of a problem may be physical or psychological in varying proportions, but is rarely limited to one or the other. So, in acknowledging the attitudes, anxieties and fantasies revealed during the consultation and the physical examination, one moves closer towards an understanding of the sexual problem.

A trained practitioner uses these skills briefly in a single consultation or over a longer period, whether this be in primary or secondary care, in hospital, specialist clinics or General Practice.

For a patient, engaging with an Institute professional is the beginning of a special therapeutic relationship.

**"The skills I have gained through IPM training help me on a daily basis in consultations with every type of patient."  
Practitioner**

### THE INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOSEXUAL MEDICINE (IPM)

The IPM is a professional organisation, registered as a charity, which provides education, training and research in psychosexual medicine for qualified medical practitioners registered with the UK General Medical Council and Allied Health Professionals. It was founded in 1974 by doctors together with Dr Tom Main, a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst.

### THE SKILLS OF PSYCHOSEXUAL MEDICINE

Fundamental to IPM work is a patient approach that is different from the traditional. The practitioner is not the expert but learns particular skills enabling the patient to develop an insight into their own problem.

#### 1 Observation and listening

The practitioner learns to listen to the words and observe the atmosphere during the consultation. Words spoken or unspoken in the consultation become important, and noticing patterns of how a patient negotiates their appointments, the urgency of their presentation, their appearance and manner may all give insights into the difficulty.

Special consideration is paid to why the patient has come now.

#### 2 The study and interpretation of the practitioner/patient relationship

The relationship that develops within a consultation is studied closely to understand which feelings arise from the patient and which from the doctor.

Using a psychodynamic approach, feelings aroused within the doctor are seen as possible "transference" of the patient's own. These observations when interpreted back to the patient may allow him/her to make connections with their sexual complaint and to understand their problem.

Psychosexual medicine does not involve generalised or prescribed solutions. The practitioner learns to tolerate a degree of uncertainty about the problem and allows the patient to be the expert.

By focussing on the interaction between the patient and the practitioner ways can be found to help him or her find a solution.

### 3 The use of the genital examination as a psychosomatic event

Psychosexual Medicine can only be practised by practitioners who examine in their every day work.

The setting of the examination provides another opportunity to look at the evolving practitioner/ patient relationship. The patient and/or the practitioner may lower their defences, thoughts which have not previously been verbalised may emerge, real and imagined fears are acknowledged.

When interpreted in the context of this relationship a true understanding of the patient's difficulty may be reached.

### FOR WHOM IS IPM TRAINING USEFUL?

IPM training appeals to those who desire a deeper understanding than that which is offered in traditional education.

Training is appropriate for doctors, nurses and others who wish to improve their skills in managing patients with psychosexual problems in their every day work setting, and for those who wish to gain a specialist qualification which accredits them to accept referrals.

### THE BASIC TRAINING SEMINAR

The Training Seminar is formed by a group who meet with a recognised IPM Seminar Leader.

Groups meet for 12 hours a term divided between 3 to 6 meetings. Seminars usually run for a period of two years after which it is hoped that practitioners develop adequate skills to take the Diploma examination and progress towards accepting referrals.

For details and to apply for training contact [admin@ipm.org.uk](mailto:admin@ipm.org.uk)

### THE FURTHER TRAINING SEMINAR

Further training works towards developing deeper skills in studying the practitioner/patient interaction and in becoming more aware of the less conscious elements occurring in the consultation. Members must recertify their specialist status with the IPM every five years.

### SEMINAR LEADERS

Leaders of seminar groups are expected to offer their work for review regularly in Leaders' Workshop.

### DIPLOMA AND MEMBERSHIP EXAMINATIONS

Details of eligibility and the criteria by which the panel of examiners maintain the standards of these examinations are available on [www.ipm.org.uk](http://www.ipm.org.uk)

### PUBLICATIONS, RESEARCH AND AUDIT

The Institute of Psychosexual Medicine Journal (IPMJ) is published twice a year. It contains articles, research papers, reports of meetings, case studies, correspondence and administrative matters. Subscribers, Diplomates and Members receive the IPMJ free of charge.

A bibliography of publications on psychosexual medicine is available from [www.ipm.org.uk](http://www.ipm.org.uk)

The IPM has developed audit tools to measure the outcomes of therapy.

### SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS

A residential Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) incorporating the AGM is held annually.

An Autumn Clinical Meeting (ACM) for the Institute is also arranged.

Regional meetings are held around the country.

### CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP

Subscribers (Trainees) are practitioners who have been in training in an accredited seminar for at least two terms.

Diplomates are those who have passed the Diploma examination.

Members are doctors who have passed the Membership examination. Together with Diplomates they are eligible to vote and stand for Council.

Honorary Members and Honorary Fellows are those who have distinguished themselves for their contribution to the Institute and who have been awarded recognition by Council.

To apply for training and for details of training groups near you contact [admin@ipm.org.uk](mailto:admin@ipm.org.uk)

**"I enjoyed IPM seminars because they stimulated parts of my brain that no other training has ever reached"**  
GP Principal



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