

Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy

Division of Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy

Address

Schwabachanlage 6
91054 Erlangen
Phone: +49 9131 8534596
Fax: +49 9131 8534153
www.psychosomatik.uk-erlangen.de

Head of Division

Prof. Dr. (TR) Yesim Erim

Contact

Heike Dahlem
Phone: +49 9131 8534596
Fax: +49 9131 8534153
psychosomatik@uk-erlangen.de

Research focus

- Psycho-oncology
- Migration and mental health
- Transplantation medicine
- Somatoform disorders and the persistent somatoform pain disorder
- Eating disorders, obesity

Structure of the Division

Professorship: 1

Personnel: 63

- Doctors (of Medicine): 12
- Scientists: 5 (thereof funded externally: 0)
- Graduate students: 16

Clinical focus areas

- Eating disorders
- Obesity
- Somatoform disorders including persistent pain disorder
- Posttraumatic stress disorders
- Psycho-oncology

Research

The research of the Division of Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy focuses on psycho-oncology, migration and mental health, transplantation medicine, somatoform disorders (persistent somatoform pain disorders), eating disorders, and obesity.

Psycho-oncology

PI: Prof. Dr. Y. Erim, K. Schieber, Dr. E. Morawa
Current research projects:

- Multicenter study to document the needs and demands of patients as well as the utilization of psycho-oncologic services
Cooperation study of the Comprehensive Cancer Center Erlangen
Funding: German Cancer Aid

- Risk-adapted follow-up care in uveal melanoma cooperation project with the West German Cancer Center Essen
Funding: German Cancer Aid

- Disease management and not recognized supportive needs in oncologic patients with special consideration to a migrant background
Funding: ELAN Fund

In addition, the following topics are being investigated in doctoral theses of medical students:

- Posttraumatic growth after critical life-events during childhood: A comparison between survivors of childhood cancer, diabetes, and a normal population
- Validation of a questionnaire on dealing with cancer patients
- Disease concepts in oncologic patients with a migrant background
- Resilience and fear of prognosis in female patients seeking a second opinion (in cooperation with the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Prof. Dr. M. Lux)
- Implementation of a regular paper-screening and a taxonomy of psychooncological interventions in the psychooncology services.

Migration and mental health

PI: Prof. Dr. Y. Erim, Dr. E. Morawa, E. Georgiadou

Considering the demographic development in Germany showing a continuous increase of persons with a migrant background (in 2016 20% of the total population), research is indicated not only on specific burdens, but also on resources of this group. Since November 2015, the same research questions have been applied to refugees additionally.

In the period under review, a cooperation study with the Institute of Epidemiology, University Hospital of Essen, and two doctoral theses on the psychological distress of persons of Turkish and Persian descent were finished and published.

Current research projects deal with health services research. A survey investigates the intercultural opening of the psychosomatic clinics in Bavaria, an ELAN-sponsored study examines the psychological health and trauma consequence disorders of Arabic-speaking asylum seekers. The Division also examines the contextual and psychological distress, motivational factors, resources and needs of vocational and volunteer supporters of refugees.

Transplantation medicine

PI: Prof. Dr. Y. Erim, K. Schieber, J. Scheel
In cooperation with the Department of Medicine 4, the predictors of adherence after

renal transplantation were examined. Based on the results of this study which analyzed patient reported outcomes as well as cognitive tests, a training to optimize the adherence and health behavior was developed and manualized. Within the framework of the research group Emerging Fields Initiative (EFI), a follow-up study of living kidney donors was conducted with particular emphasis on the perceived autonomy as well as fatigue complaints.

Somatoform disorders and the persistent somatoform pain disorder

PI: Prof. Dr. Y. Erim

In the etiology of persistent somatoform pain disorder, early childhood adversities, an uncertain binding style, and altered cerebral activations (dysfunctional processing of pain and distress) are postulated as important factors and investigated in this study in cooperation with the Division of Neuroradiology (Prof. Dr. A. Dörfler). In addition to psychometric measurements, neuroimaging techniques are used.

Eating disorders, obesity

PI: PD Dr. G. Paslakis

Currently, four studies on eating disorders are carried out using a basic research approach. In a prospective, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial, the effect of substitution with an estrogen-progestin combination in adult women with anorexia nervosa is investigated. In a second study, a Go/NoGo paradigm for the detection of impulsivity is used to record the response times as a marker of impulsivity in patients with an eating disorder. Another study investigates jogging as a virtual reality in patients with eating disorder and movement urge. The results can also be used in the psychotherapy of the patients. Finally, the Approach-Avoidance Task (AAT) paradigm is used to investigate the eating habits in patients with eating disorders. Images of high-calorie and low-calorie foods are pulled or pushed away. This study also aims to create an innovative implicit therapy module.

Teaching

The Division of Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy is intensively involved in the curriculum of the Faculty of Medicine and participates in several cross discipline teaching efforts (Querschnittsfächer) within the curriculum. It also offers courses for psychology students. Advanced training for psychological psychotherapists-in-training is also provided. Within the context of the degree program Medical Process Management, the Division of Psychosomatic

Medicine and Psychotherapy is responsible for a seminar on "Communication and Cooperation Aspects within the Health-Care System". The use of simulation patients with standardized exercise cases was included into the teaching program.

The Division of Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy supervises Bachelor's and Master's theses as well as MD theses.

Selected publications

Erim Y, Scheel J, Beckmann M, Klein CG, Paul A. Standardized Evaluation of Candidates Before Liver Transplantation With the Transplant Evaluation Rating Scale. *Psychosomatics*. 2017 Mar - Apr;58(2):141-150

Morawa E, Dragano N, Jöckel KH, Moebus S, Brand T, Erim Y. Somatization among persons with Turkish origin: Results of the pretest of the German National Cohort Study. *J Psychosom Res*. 2017 May;96:1-9

Paslakis G, Fauck V, Röder K, Rauh E, Rauh M, Erim Y. Virtual reality jogging as a novel exposure paradigm for the acute urge to be physically active in patients with eating disorders: Implications for treatment. *Int J Eat Disord*. 2017 Nov;50(11):1243-1246

Nacak Y, Morawa E, Tuffner D, Erim Y. Insecure attachment style and cumulative traumatic life events in patients with somatoform pain disorder: A cross-sectional study. *J Psychosom Res*. 2017 Dec;103:77-82

Scheel JF, Schieber K, Reber S, Stoessel L, Waldmann E, Jank S, Eckardt KU, Grundmann F, Vitinius F, de Zwaan M, Bertram A, Erim Y. Psychosocial Variables Associated with Immunosuppressive Medication Non-Adherence after Renal Transplantation. *Front Psychiatry*. 2018 Feb 15;9:23

Georgiadou E, Zbidat A, Schmitt GM, Erim Y. Prevalence of Mental Distress Among Syrian Refugees With Residence Permission in Germany: A Registry-Based Study. *Front Psychiatry*. 2018 Aug 28;9:393