

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Susan K. Johnson, PhD, received her MA in general psychology from New York University in 1986 and her PhD in behavioral neuroscience from Rutgers University in 1991. She was a neuropsychology fellow and research scientist at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey from 1992 through 1996. She joined the faculty of the Department of Psychology at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte in 1996, where she is currently an associate professor. She has published extensively in the fields of neuropsychology and health psychology. She lives with her husband and two daughters in Davidson, North Carolina.



This book tackles a difficult problem, medically unexplained illness, in an informative, intellectual, and easy-to-understand volume. It integrates and synthesizes current knowledge from neurology, psychiatry, psychology, and neuroscience to address the complicated and elusive topic of why people suffer from unexplained illnesses and what we can do about it. This thought-provoking book will challenge the experienced clinician–researcher to think more broadly, enlighten and enrich the student of medicine and psychology to think more clearly, and challenge the fields of science and medicine to think more boldly when facing clinical problems about which we have little understanding.

—**John DeLuca**, PhD, Director of Neuroscience Research, Vice President for Research Training, Kessler Medical Rehabilitation Research and Education Center, West Orange, NJ; Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and of Neurosciences, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Piscataway; author of *Fatigue as a Window to the Brain*

The integration of psychological treatment into general medical practice is an important outcome of studies of patients with medically undiagnosed syndromes, such as irritable bowel syndrome, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, and multiple chemical sensitivity. Faced with patients who have various pain, sleep, and mood problems and who suffer from somatic symptoms that do not go away with traditional pharmacological treatment, physicians will be relieved of the frustration of not knowing how to refer or possibly erring in ordering expensive diagnostic and imaging studies that are not useful. Psychologists can benefit from treatment chapters that will assist them in helping patients address lifestyle problems such as uncertainty, pain, and catastrophizing. Health care managed companies can profit economically from reimbursing early efforts to treat rather than medicalizing these disorders with unnecessary medical and imaging tests. The book serves medical students and psychologists as an excellent illustration of mind–body illness considerations within current research.

—**Barbara G. Melamed**, PhD, ABPP, Diplomate in Clinical Health Psychology and Professor, Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Mercy College, Dobbs Ferry, NY

More women than men report medically unexplained illness (MUI)—but why, and what are the implications? Johnson offers a comprehensive examination of the mechanisms for MUI, reaching beyond the usual simple description of risk factors. This text is essential for researchers and clinicians who struggle to understand and treat patients who suffer from disorders that do not conveniently fit the current models of psychiatric or physical illness. If you want to learn what we know (and don't know) about MUI, this is the book to read.

—**Nancy Fiedler**, PhD, Professor of Environmental and Occupational Medicine, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Piscataway

SUSAN K. JOHNSON

Medically Unexplained Illness

Gender and Biopsychosocial Implications

SUSAN K. JOHNSON

Medically unexplained illnesses are among the most common disorders in primary medical care today. Accordingly, there has been a recent surge of interest in the physiology of such illnesses as fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, irritable bowel syndrome, and multiple chemical sensitivity. However, biomedical models can only go so far toward understanding a group of painful and often frustrating symptoms. These models are unable to fully answer such questions as how these vulnerabilities are aggravated by psychosocial stress factors, including childhood abuse, work, and interpersonal stress; what cognitive factors contribute to an increase in symptoms; and, perhaps more important, why medically unexplained illnesses strike women in overwhelmingly disproportionate numbers. Author Susan K. Johnson surveys the most recent research on how psychological, social, and physiological factors may interact and contribute to the development of symptoms and illustrates how this knowledge can inform practice through the use of effective therapy examples and treatment approaches. This volume will appeal to both psychologists and health care professionals interested in more fully understanding the interaction between mind and body in medically unexplained illness.

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