

Symposium | Treatment of Dissociative Disorders and Family Systems : [Symposium 36] Exploring clinical cases on dissociative spectrum disorders: a transcultural psychiatry perspective on family system and implications on cultural background

📅 Fri. Sep 26, 2025 10:40 AM - 12:10 PM JST | Fri. Sep 26, 2025 1:40 AM - 3:10 AM UTC 🏢 Session Room 7 (Conference Room C)

[Symposium 36] Exploring clinical cases on dissociative spectrum disorders: a transcultural psychiatry perspective on family system and implications on cultural background

Moderator: Camilla Callegari (Department of Medicine and Surgery, Division of Psychiatry, University of Insubria, Varese, Italy)

[SY-36-01]

Exploring clinical cases on dissociative spectrum disorders: a transcultural psychiatry perspective on family system and implications on cultural background

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[SY-36-02]

Hidden dissociation in an affluent migration context: a clinical case discussion

*Michele Mattia¹ (1. Milanese Family Therapy Centre (CMTF), Swiss Office, Lugano)

[SY-36-03]

The black women: a clinical case of a young patient of Latin American descent presenting psychotic

*Ivano Caselli¹, *Michele Mattia³, *Camilla Callegari¹, *Pietro Barbetta² (1. University of Insubria (Italy), 2. University of Bergamo (Italy), 3. Milanese Family Therapy Centre (CMTF), Swiss Office (Switzerland))

[SY-36-04]

Transcultural perspectives on behavioral disturbances and dissociative manifestations in a sub-Saharan woman: the impact of migration

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Keywords : dissociation; dissociative disorders; transcultural psychiatry; family system; cultural background; relational trauma; migration.

Relational trauma refers to the long-lasting impact of abuse, neglect, or abandonment within key relationships during childhood, often linked to issues like attachment problems and distrust from narcissistic caregivers. These wounds can persist into adulthood, influencing mental health issues such as personality disorders, complex post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety. Also, migrations, which represent a growing, complex social phenomenon in the West, expose migrants to challenging journey that destabilizes their sense of identity and contributes to dissociative symptoms. The influence of culture and society of origin can affect the development and treatment of resulting psychopathologies. The symposium will delve into a series of clinical cases related to dissociative spectrum disorders, with a particular focus on the role of the family system as a catalyst for dissociative defenses, examined through a transcultural psychiatric lens. The discussions will highlight how these manifestations are often overlooked and underdiagnosed in clinical practice, despite their frequent roots in early relational trauma or repeated traumatic experiences. The cases to be presented frequently exhibit a "hidden" nature, complicating diagnosis and treatment. The authors will also explore the critical roles of both psychotherapeutic and pharmacological interventions, as well as rehabilitative approaches, in managing these complex cases. This comprehensive exploration aims to enhance understanding of the intricate interplay between migration trauma, cultural background, familial dynamics, and dissociative pathology, ultimately improving recognition and treatment in clinical settings. A cultural perspective on these disorders can help clinicians and researchers to recognize the implicit biases and limitations in current psychiatric theories and practices, leading to more effective approaches for the diverse populations served by psychiatric services globally.

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[SY-36-02] Hidden dissociation in an affluent migration context: a clinical case discussion

*Michele Mattia¹ (1. Milanese Family Therapy Centre (CMTF), Swiss Office, Lugano)

The presentation will focus on a clinical case involving an adult patient from the Romansh-speaking part of Switzerland. Switzerland is composed of four regions, each with its own language and culture: German, French, Italian, and Romansh. The initial diagnoses were schizoid personality disorder, alcohol dependence syndrome, and recurrent depressive syndrome. Throughout the course of weekly personal psychotherapy, it was only after she began to build therapeutic trust that underlying family trauma and significant relational trauma within her current family began to surface. She is married and has two children. Her husband holds a significant role in the Ticino health care system. As therapy progressed, it became evident that the husband exhibited severe narcissism, creating a panopticon-like environment that entrapped the patient. The incorporation of couples' treatment progressively enabled the patient to navigate the delicate complexities of her relationship and family dynamics. The author aims to highlight how numerous cases of dissociation are often concealed within seemingly unsuspecting cultural, family, and societal systems.

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[SY-36-03] *The black women*: a clinical case of a young patient of Latin American descent presenting psychotic

*Ivano Caselli¹, *Michele Mattia³, *Camilla Callegari¹, *Pietro Barbetta² (1. University of Insubria (Italy), 2. University of Bergamo (Italy), 3. Milanese Family Therapy Centre (CMTF), Swiss Office (Switzerland))

Keywords : dissociation、 transcultural psychiatry、 family system、 relational trauma

This presentation will focus on a clinical case involving a young female patient of Latin American origin diagnosed with persistent delusional disorder within learning disorder and borderline personality disorder who lives with her parents and younger sister. The family history is significant for psychiatric disorders, and the patient's complex clinical presentation includes dissociative symptoms with intricate perceptual disturbances (both visual and auditory). The pleomorphic symptomatology appears to be influenced by the family's cultural background and traumatic contextual events. The patient receives therapeutic-rehabilitative educational support and is under continuous psychological and psychiatric care, including pharmacological intervention. The author aims to highlight the role of the family system in promoting dissociative defenses through a transcultural psychiatric perspective.

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[SY-36-04] Transcultural perspectives on behavioral disturbances and dissociative manifestations in a sub-Saharan woman: the impact of migration

*CAMILLA MARIA TERESA CALLEGARI¹, *Michele Mattia³, *Ivano Caselli¹, *Pietro Barbetta²
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Keywords : dissociation、 transcultural psychiatry、 family system、 migration

The presentation delves into the case of a young sub-Saharan woman who migrated from a French-speaking country in West Africa to a small town in Northern Italy. She exhibited severe behavioral disturbances, dissociative manifestations, trance during religious rituals, and substance-induced psychosis. The authors analyze her symptomatology through a transcultural lens, highlighting the significant impact of the migration process. Cultural divergence, language barriers, and stigma have complicated her clinical evaluation and management. The discussion will explore how cultural displacement and the challenges of adapting to a new environment can contribute to the development and exacerbation of mental health issues. By examining this case, the session aims to underscore the importance of culturally sensitive approaches in understanding and addressing the psychological well-being of migrants.