

Course Title/Code: **Descriptive Psychopathology (MMPH6198)**

Department: Psychiatry

Objective: Guiding participants through an in-depth exploration of the symptoms of psychosis, this module starts with an introduction to the principles and techniques of symptom assessment using the phenomenological approach. Factors important to symptoms ascertainment, the potential pitfalls, and the central role of symptom identification in diagnosis will be considered. Classification of core psychotic experiences such as hallucinations and delusions will be detailed. Related subjective phenomena (e.g., imagery, pseudohallucinations, over-valued ideas, confabulations) will also be explored and contrasted with core symptoms. Negative and motor symptoms, language disorganization, and affective features will also be covered in this module. Participants will be equipped with skills in symptoms assessment and be familiarized with common rating instruments.

Content: **Phenomenological approach to descriptive psychopathology**

- Descriptive Psychopathology
- Nature of mental symptoms (e.g., what are normal and abnormal experiences state vs traits, active vs residual symptoms, primary vs secondary, side effects)
- What are the core symptoms in psychosis (discussion of Schneiderian's first rank symptoms)
- Assessment of symptoms (common instruments, validity and reliability, interviewing skills)
- Neurological symptoms, confusional states, regional cortical dysfunctions (frontal, parietal, temporal symptoms)
- Symptom evolution (prodromal, relapse, treatment response)

Disorders of language functions

- Formal thought disorders
- Other speech disturbances
- Overview of theories (e.g., broadening of category)
- Assessing disorganization

Hallucination and disorders of perception

- Hallucinations (AH and other hallucinations)
- Illusions
- Imagery
- Pseudohallucinations
- Other sensory distortions
- Overview of theories (e.g., inner speech)
- Assessing hallucinations

Motor symptoms & negative symptoms

- Negative symptoms
- Catatonic signs, ritualistic behaviour, mannerism, extrapyramidal symptoms, Parkinsonism, akathisia, dyskinesia, dystonia, associated subjective experiences, tics
- Neurological soft signs
- Overview of theories (e.g., hypofrontality for negative symptoms)
- Assessing negative & motor symptoms

Delusion and disorders of thinking

- Delusions
- Overvalued ideas
- Confabulations
- Superstition and simultaneity
- Deception
- Obsession
- Beliefs
- Overview of theories (e.g., salience, self-monitoring, probabilistic reasoning)
- Assessing delusions

Affective & anxiety symptoms

- Manic features
- Depression
- Insight
- Subjective accounts of executive, memory, and attention problems
- Sleep
- Generalized anxiety
- Phobia
- Agoraphobia
- Social phobia
- Mixed anxiety depression
- Obsessions & compulsions

Elucidating psychopathology: Etude I

Measurement of psychopathology: Etude II

Learning outcomes

Knowledge

- Acquire an in-depth understanding of the symptoms of psychosis, their detailed classification and characterization, as well as their demarcation from related experiential phenomena.
 - Appreciate the nature of common psychotic symptoms, their definitions and classifications, including delusions, hallucinations and formal thought disorder

- Knowledge of the key features dimensions in delusions and hallucinations, clinically important types of delusions and hallucinations.
- Appreciate potential distress and risks associated with particular symptoms
- Familiar with the basic measurement tools of symptomatology.
- Appreciate the role and structure of clinical rating instruments
- Understand how reliability is assessed
- Understand the pros and cons of structured and semi-structure instruments
- Familiar with the structure of commonly used instruments in psychosis: SAPS, SANS, PANSS, SOFAS, CDS

Prerequisite: None

Duration: 1 semester; 2.5 hours/week; 24 contact hours

Continuous assessment/examinationratio: Continuous assessments 40%
Written examinations 60%

Examination method and duration: Written examination / 1.5 hours