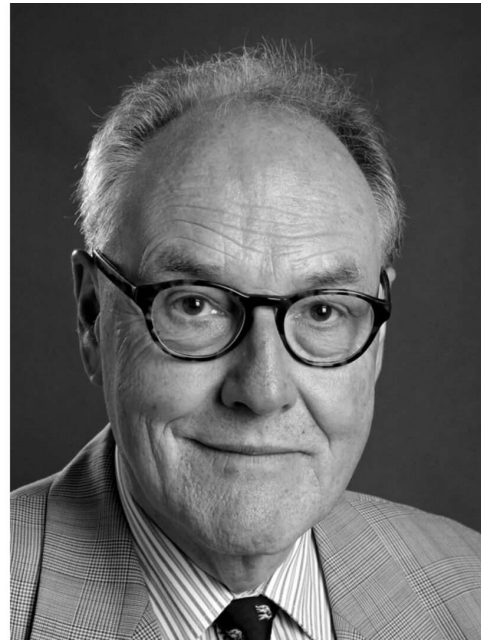
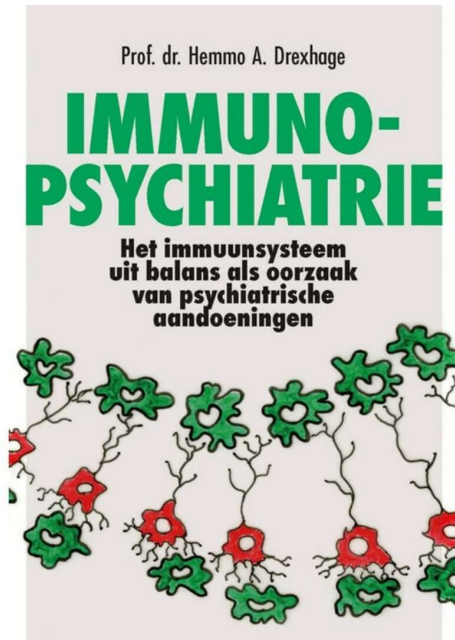


Book ImmunoPsychiatry

"Psychiatric disorders are not just in the mind"

New insights from ImmunoPsychiatry are causing a paradigm shift in psychiatry. This is what Prof. Dr. Hemmo Drexhage of Erasmus MC states in his book Immuno-Psychiatry. He points to a dysregulated immune system as an explanation for psychiatric disorders, autoimmune diseases and lung Covid.



Hemmo Drexhage, physician and emeritus professor of medical immunology, is one of the Dutch pioneers in the field of ImmunoPsychiatry: a relatively new field that explains psychiatric illnesses based on a disturbed immune system

Paradigm shift

The immune system plays an important role in the development of serious mental disorders such as severe depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and autism, according to European research coordinated by Drexhage. "But we also see a role of the immune system in Long-Covid and myalgic encephalitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS). This means that immunotherapies can be developed that can improve the fate of patients with these serious disorders," he explains.

ImmunoPsychiatry has developed gradually since the 1990s and has taken off in recent years. According to Drexhage, the field represents a paradigm shift in psychiatry, as more and more is known about how serious mental disorders arise. Drexhage: 'These disorders are not just 'in the mind', but also have physical causes, such as the disrupted immune system.'

Schizophrenia

Drexhage expects that the ImmunoPsychiatry will make diagnoses differently and sharper. "And that opens new doors to better treatment," says Drexhage.

Drexhage and colleagues illustrate that this approach can work in a recent scientific article. They used an immune test to identify schizophrenia patients who benefited from adding a statin to regular schizophrenia treatment. Statins are drugs that affect the immune system through cholesterol metabolism.

Wide audience

The book is intended for a wide audience: the reader who is looking for the causes of psychiatric suffering, patients, their loved ones and caregivers. It also contains in-depth chapters for psychiatrists and psychologists less trained in immunology. The book provides new insights to (prospective) professionals who are professionally interested in the new developments. Think of people who work in medicine, psychology, pharmacology, biomedical sciences or health and life.

Drexhage: 'We also pay attention to substantiated lifestyle, nutrition and parenting tips that have a beneficial effect on a disturbed immune balance and can thus somewhat alleviate psychiatric suffering.'

Identifying immune abnormalities in blood

Hemmo Drexhage has been coordinating three successive major EU-funded projects since 2008 (MOODINFLAME, PSYCHAID and MOODSTRATIFICATION). The last project will end in mid-2023. This project aims to identify psychiatric patients with characteristic immune abnormalities through blood tests. And then to design treatments that correct these immune abnormalities and have a beneficial effect on the course of the psychiatric disorder.

The successive projects involve 26 research groups from 11 EU countries and the EU has invested more than 20 million euros.

Drexhage is working with Bernadette Wijnker-Holmes, psychologist and writer, on knowledge dissemination from the EU study MOODSTRATIFICATION. Beatrice Keunen is a writer and journalist specializing in upbringing, education and development issues. ISBN: 9789085602286