

Psychosomatics to Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry: A Historical Review of the Field

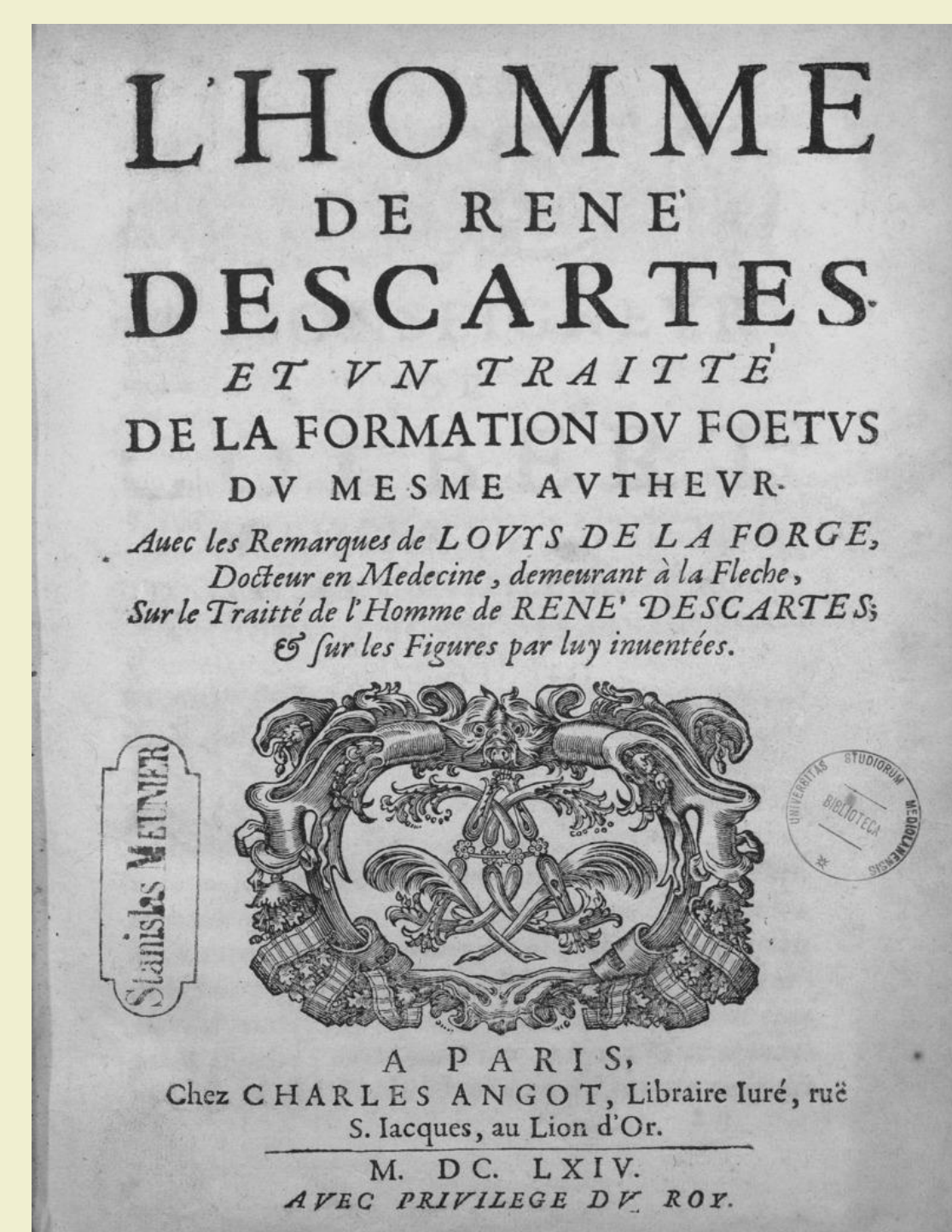
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Introduction

The field of Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry sits at an exciting interface between disciplines of psychiatry and medicine. Unlike other medical consultation services, Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry is a field unto itself, with unique skills apart from general psychiatry. The specialty was officially formed in 1920's, generally known as Psychosomatic Medicine, though changed names recently in 2018 to Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry for further clarity. While these changes in name are well known, what is not always appreciated is the rich history specific to the field.

Mind-Body Connection

- Greek philosophers including Plato and Aristotle suggested a holistic view of medical disease as encompassing both physical and mental aspects.
- Rene Descartes (1596-1650) was a proponent of dualistic thinking, postulating separateness between body and mind (Cartesian Dualism) ⁴
 - “Res Cogitans”
 - “Res Extensa”
- Medicine in the 1600's-1800's maintained a holistic view of mental and physical connection.



Psychoanalytic Influence

- Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-1893) famously studied “hysteria” at the Salpêtrière in Paris, using hypnosis to recreate symptoms.
- Freud studied under Charcot in Paris from 1885-1886 before beginning his work in psychoanalysis.
- Freud's early work, *Studies in Hysteria*, (1895) examined the connection between psychological and somatic phenomena, which formed the root of psychoanalysis. ^{4,5}



Psychosomatic Medicine

- In 1818 German Psychiatrist Heinroth first used the word “psychosomatic” to describe both mental and physical aspects of insomnia. ^{4,5}
- In 1922, Felix Deutsch, a Viennese physician and student of Freud, coined the term “Psychosomatic Medicine.” ^{4,5}
- The field of Psychosomatics, highly influenced by psychoanalytic thinking, grew in the 1930's 1950s in the US, spearheaded at the Chicago School of Psychosomatics by Franz Alexander. ^{1,2}
- The Academy of Psychosomatic Medicine was founded in 1954. ⁵

Consultation Model

- 1943, Edward Billings founded the first formal version of a “psychiatric liaison” service at the University of Colorado Hospital, though similar models were growing throughout the country. He also estimated a cost-saving benefit of such a model. ^{2, 5}
- Consultation models across the United States grew in the 1960's-1980s, branching into a clinical subspecialty separate from the existing field of psychosomatic medicine.

Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry

- 2004 CL Psychiatry was recognized as a subspecialty by American Board of Medical Specialties. ²
- 2018: Academy of Psychosomatic Medicine officially changed to Academy of Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry.
- CL Psychiatry continues work in general hospital settings, with increasing outpatient subspecialty liaison presence.

References

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