

Health Psychology

Health psychology is concerned with understanding the psychological influences on how people stay healthy, why they become ill, and how they respond when they do get ill. It has become a burgeoning field of inquiry over the last 20 years. The field emphasizes the importance of a biopsychosocial approach to health and illness. It covers areas of health behaviour change, patient-practitioner interactions, health promotion, prevention, and treatment of illness.

To become a health psychologist you need to complete a Masters of Science in Health Psychology and a Postgraduate Diploma in Health Psychology (Internship). Students who fulfil these requirements are then eligible to apply for registration with as a psychologist with the New Zealand Psychologists Board. The University of Auckland and Massey University offer Masters programmes in health psychology.

Alternatively if you do not want to work as a practitioner, postgraduate study in health psychology and a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) can also lead to academic and research careers as well as health promotion careers within tertiary institutions, health agencies, and within hospital environments.

Health psychologists are scientist-practitioners and work across primary, secondary, and tertiary health care sectors. Many are working within hospital settings such as, cardiology, heart/lung transplantation, respiratory, diabetes, general surgery, oncology, pain, and renal services. Others work in primary healthcare organizations (PHOs), non-government organizations (NGOs), and in private practice. There is huge scope for health psychologists working in these areas from direct clinical delivery of psychological treatments to consultation with other colleagues in the health care system and relevant stakeholders. Health psychologists work with individuals, groups, families/whanau in the context of improving the health (physical and emotional) outcomes and long-term condition management of their condition. In order to practice as a psychologist, practitioners need to be registered with the Psychologists Board.

To find out more about studying health psychology go to

University of Auckland

<http://www.auckland.ac.nz/uoa/future-postgraduates/fp-study-options/fp-programmes-and-courses/fp-by-subject/fp-postgraduate-programmes-by-subject-h#s2c5>

Massey University

<http://healthpsychmassey.myblog.net.nz/en/>

To find out more about registering as a health psychologist go to

<http://www.psychologistsboard.org.nz/scopes-of-practice2>