

What should other doctors know about catatonia?

Dr. Northoff:

In the same way I need to know as a psychiatrist when there is fever, there might be something seriously going on in the body. Then I order immediately a blood lab. And then I call my internal medicine colleague, but I already provided the blood lab to give the internal medicine colleague some idea.

Similarly, I would like my colleagues to know that, okay, if there's this strange, let's say, movement stuff, which can have a psychological cause/origin, you need to call the psychiatrist. That's all. Of course, then they probably need to work together to exclude neurological origins. like encephalitis, virus infections, other things, because it can also be associated with organic. But don't deride the power of your psyche — internal medicine people or medicine people in general say, "Oh, it's just psychological and then it's just derogatory." No, it's everything — how you perceive things. That's very, very important.

So just the power of the psychological experience. And that can, by itself, lead to certain symptoms like catatonia. Call the psychiatrist or the psychologist, or call The Catatonia Foundation, even better, because they are the real experts.