

# somatization disorder - definition of somatization disorder by Medical dictionary

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## somatization disorder

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### somatization disorder

*n.*

A disorder characterized by an individual's seeking help for and acquiring a complicated medical history of multiple physical symptoms referring to a variety of organ systems, but for whose complaints there is no detectable organic disorder or injury.

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### somatization disorder

Etymology: Gk, *soma* + *izein*, to cause

a *DSM-IV* psychiatric disorder characterized by recurrent multiple physical complaints and symptoms for which there is no organic cause. It is classified as a somatoform disorder in *DSM-IV*. The condition typically begins in adolescence or in the early adult years and is less common in men. The symptoms vary according to the individual and the underlying emotional conflict. Some common symptoms are GI dysfunction, paralysis, temporary blindness, cardiopulmonary distress, painful or irregular menstruation, sexual indifference, and pain during intercourse. Hypochondriasis may develop if the condition is untreated. Also called [Briquet's syndrome](#). See also [conversion disorder](#).

Mosby's Medical Dictionary, 8th edition. © 2009, Elsevier.

### somatization [so"mah-ti'za'shun]

in psychiatry, the conversion of mental experiences or states into bodily symptoms.

**somatization disorder** a [SOMATOFORM DISORDER](#) characterized by multiple vague, recurring somatic complaints that cannot be fully explained by any known general medical condition or the direct effect of a chemical substance, but are not intentionally feigned or produced; it usually begins before age 30 and persists for several years. The patient may simply complain of being ill or may have specific symptoms, but the complaints will include a combination of at least multiple pain symptoms, multiple gastrointestinal symptoms, a sexual symptom, and a neurological symptom. Typical complaints include double vision, fainting, abdominal pain, bowel problems, painful menstruation, and sexual indifference. The complaints are often presented in a dramatic and exaggerated manner, but the patient is vague about their exact nature. The patient may visit many health care providers, sometimes several simultaneously, and undergo numerous diagnostic procedures, unnecessary treatments, and even surgery. Most such patients are anxious and depressed and have difficulty in personal relationships; many have traits of [HISTRIONIC PERSONALITY DISORDER](#). They are seldom free of symptoms in spite of frequent medical attention; in fact, the repeated, unnecessary diagnostic procedures or surgery may only add to their suffering. The outlook for these patients is poor. Called also [Briquet's syndrome](#).

Miller-Keane Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing, and Allied Health, Seventh Edition. © 2003 by Saunders, an imprint of Elsevier, Inc. All rights reserved.

**somatization disorder** Psychiatry A chronic disorder that begins before age 30, more in ♀, characterized by multiple and recurrent Sx and complaints of various body systems, for which the Pt regularly seeks medical attention for unexplained somatic complaints; Sx suggesting organ dysfunction(s) but not supported by lab data or clinical findings, are often vague, don't appear to be voluntary and may fulfill a psychological need Clinical Sx are severe enough to lead to visits to health professionals, require medication, or interfere with living; Sx begin or worsen after stress—eg, loss of job, close relative, or friend; Pts believe themselves to be sickly, have pseudoneuralgias—visual defects, dysphagia, voice loss, urinary retention, convulsions, seizures, GI Sx—colicky pain, N&V, dysmenorrhea, ↓ libido, pain—low back, genitalia, joints, cardiopulmonary Sx—eg, dyspnea, palpitations, chest pain; SD results from psychological, behavioral, interpersonal, and social factors, making treatment complex and multimodal. Cf Factitious diseases, [Hypochondriasis](#).

McGraw-Hill Concise Dictionary of Modern Medicine. © 2002 by The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

## so·ma·ti·za·tion dis·or·der

1. a mental disorder characterized by presentation of a complicated medical history and of physical symptoms referring to a variety of organ systems, but without a detectable or known organic basis.
2. a DSM diagnosis that is established when the specified criteria are met.

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## so·ma·ti·za·tion dis·or·der (sō'mă-tī-zā'shŭn dis-ō'r'dĕr)

A mental disorder characterized by presentation of a complicated medical history and of physical symptoms referring to a variety of organ systems, but without a detectable or known organic basis.

See also: [conversion](#), [hysteria](#), [conversion disorder](#)

Medical Dictionary for the Health Professions and Nursing © Farlex 2012

## Patient discussion about somatization disorder

**Q. Can depression cause your sight to narrow and your vision to be very spacey?** Can depression cause your sight to narrow and your vision to be very spacey? If not what else may be the factor? If it did not seem to be that you were actually losing your vision and that you needed glasses.

**A.** Depression may be part of a wider problem. Perhaps stress headaches or migraine headaches or something like that is causing the vision problem. Tension will cause your muscles to lock up. Some of the tension headaches I have had made me think I was not seeing so good. It was like a pain all the way around and across the top of my head. My doctor readily recognized that symptom and gave me a prescription for them, and it has worked well on them, something called Dolgic.

### [More discussions about somatization disorder](#)

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