

Lora Dimitrova

ADVANCING AN EVIDENCE-BASED UNDERSTANDING OF DISSOCIATIVE IDENTITY DISORDER

Dissociative identity disorder (DID) remains one of the most misunderstood and under-researched conditions in mental health. Despite growing evidence, misconceptions continue to influence both clinical and public understanding. This keynote presents research dismantling several misconceptions about DID and synthesises recent advances to provide a more evidence-based understanding of DID, with a particular emphasis on the relationship between trauma, dissociation and neurobiological functioning. Key neuroimaging findings demonstrating distinct identity-state dependent brain activation patterns in DID compared to control groups are first reviewed. Building on established neuroimaging findings, behavioural and neurological evidence examining inter-identity avoidance of self-relevant trauma-related knowledge offers insights into the nature of subjectively experienced inter-identity amnesia. The presentation will then provide a potential biomarker for inter-identity avoidance through an exploration of the hippocampus. Given the role of emotional encoding in traumatising experiences, the keynote will also examine the amygdala in relation to key dissociative symptoms. The keynote concludes by identifying priorities for future research to promote more rigorous scientific work, collaboration, and improved clinical visibility of dissociative disorders.