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Peer Review

# Review of: "The Bio-Psycho-Social Holobiont Model of Health: Integrating the Biopsychosocial Paradigm, Microbiota Science, and Psychoneuroendocrinoimmunology"

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**What it says:** The author wants to add gut microbiome science into Engel's classic biopsychosocial model (bio+psych+social), calling health a matter of "coherence" between body, mind, society, and microbes.

**Main problems:**

1. **Not really new** — Claims novelty just because a PubMed search of two exact words came up empty. But similar mind-microbiome integration already exists in the literature under different names (gut-brain axis research, psychobiotics, etc.). Doesn't properly compare against that work.
2. **No real definitions** — Key terms like "coherence" and "informational convergence" sound scientific but aren't measurable. You can't test or disprove this model as written — it's just relabeling existing ideas, not a real theoretical model.
3. **Leans on the author's own work** — The core foundation (the "teleonomy" concept) comes from the author's own earlier book chapter and magazine articles, not peer-reviewed outside sources. Same for the new "Microbiota-Gut-Brain-Mind" term.
4. **One study, big claim** — Uses a single mouse study (Chang et al.) to support a huge general claim that stress reshapes the microbiome. Too thin.
5. **New name, unclear reason** — Adding "Mind" to "gut-brain axis" isn't explained well — doesn't show what it adds that "brain" didn't already cover.
6. **No real-world example** — Talks about clinical/research use but never shows what it would actually look like in a real patient or study.



doi.org/10.32388/UDWIJY

**Bottom line:** Interesting idea, nicely written, but reads more like a philosophical essay than a scientific model. Needs actual definitions, outside evidence, and a real example before it's publishable as a serious review article.

## Declarations

**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.