

Comment on “How we become ill” by Patrick Finzer

Agnese Mariotti

Comment on: **P Finzer**

I agree with Dr. Finzer on the role of emergence in complex diseases [1]. In addition, I would like to point out that shifts in a system’s properties towards a state of disease as he discusses in his article are promoted not only by purely physical interactions that, as such, can in principle be quantified and described, but also by individual factors that are peculiar to every

subject—in particular, the individual perception of a physical stimulus. An inflammatory reaction could for instance be modulated by the patient’s psychological state both directly through molecular mediators, and indirectly through behaviours induced by this psychological state.

Thus, interventions aimed at balancing psychological perception and reactions—ranging from educational programs to psychotherapy—could contribute to

preventing and modulating a system’s shifts towards disease. In other words, if most “emergent principles that govern the shift between system states should be the same”, emergent principles that are more distinctive for each individual also affect a system’s properties and are “essential for diagnosis and efficient treatment”.

Reference

1. Finzer P (2017) *EMBO Rep* 18: 515–518