



Sir Simon Charles Wessely

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Sir Simon Charles Wessely is a British psychiatrist and professor of psychological medicine at the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London. He is also head of its department of psychological medicine, vice dean for academic psychiatry, teaching and training at the Institute of Psychiatry, as well as Director of the King's Centre for Military Health Research.

He was knighted in the 2013 for services to military healthcare and to psychological medicine. In 2014 he was elected president of the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Wessely's main current research is around various aspects of military health, including further work on the outcome of Gulf War illness, psychological stressors of military life, risk and benefits of military service, screening and health surveillance within the Armed Forces, social and psychological outcomes of ex service personnel, and historical aspects of military psychiatry.

More recently, Wessely's work was the first to show that service in the 1991 Gulf War had had a significant effect on the health of UK servicemen and women. His group also confirmed that classic psychiatric injury, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), was not a sufficient explanation for the observed health problems.

Wessely also has a long-standing interest in how normal people react to adversity, and what, if any, responses are appropriate. He was a co-author of an influential Cochrane Review showing that the conventional response – to offer people who have been involved in disaster immediate psychological debriefing – was not only ineffective, but possibly did more harm than good.

In private life, Wessely is married and has two sons. His interests include skiing and history, and he cycled annually from London to Paris between 2006 and 2012, to raise money for veterans' charities.

The title of Sir Simon's lecture at the DPS Annual Meeting is: "*Time Bombs and Tidal Waves*"