

**BALINT GROUPS AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE
RELATIONSHIP—DOCTORS' MOTIVATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Rita Tavares Fonseca, MA and Nuno Rebelo dos Santos, PhD

University of Évora, Department of Psychology, Évora, Portugal.

rita.tavares.fonseca@gmail.com

Abstract

The doctor-patient relationship has assumed varied importance throughout history. However, a good relationship will always be essential to medical performance, both the human and technical aspects. Whereas these aspects are determined by different factors, we examine Balint Groups in relation to knowledge, skills and especially to motivation. We conclude that Balint groups promote the development of emotional competence. We discuss self-determination theory and suggest that Balint work is a process of professional development that promotes the internalization of motivation to work inherent in the doctor-patient relationship.