



MEDICINE 2040

Rewriting the future of healthcare

PSYCHOLOGICAL CORRELATES OF IMMUNITY

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There is evidence that psychological factors affect the occurrence and course of physical diseases, including cancer, but it is mostly theoretically controversial. The purpose is to present a theoretical model for studying the involvement of psychological factors in immunity. It is based on the cognitive orientation theory that defines the major psychological factors functioning as psychological correlates of disease in addition to other risk factors and pathogens. These factors consist of specific beliefs defined formally and in contents. Combining the themes common to different diseases mainly cancer resulted in one concise questionnaire "The cognitive orientation questionnaire of health (COH)". In previous studies COH scores were compared for individuals with different health conditions and healthy controls. The results showed that high scorers on COH who were healthy undergraduates had fewer episodes of sickness and of flu (Kreitler); men undergoing hernia surgery had post surgery fewer complications and shorter hospitalization (Bentwich); men who underwent coronary events had coronary events of lower severity (Greif et al.); women with breast cancer undergoing chemotherapy reported fewer and less symptoms after each phase (Richkov); men 50-60 yrs old had fewer risk factors for CHD (Brunner); healthy individuals 18-69 yrs old had lower levels of leukocyte adhesiveness (Berliner). COH was not related to health behaviors and adhering to medical instructions. The findings support the conclusion that COH assesses a general tendency of health proneness that may be considered as immunity on the psychological level. It is advisable to assess its relation to physiological immunity indices.