

Health psychology

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HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY It is the study of behavioral and psychological processes in healthcare, health and illness. Health, on the other hand, can be defined as the level of metabolic efficiency in a living organism. It is also the general condition of an individual's body and mind, which means he or she is free from pain, illness or injury. The World Health Organization, in a broader sense in 1946 defined health as " a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

Health psychology can be described in different perspectives. On the current perspective, WHO defines health as the condition of being in a good state with physical, cultural, economic and spiritual attributes (Cherry, 2009 p. 36). Psychological factors include the mental process as well as the behavior of an individual. Cognition is a mental activity that entails perception, remembrance, thinking, interpretation and solving problems. Emotion is a feeling affecting our thoughts, as well as behavior and psychology. Emotions can be either positive or negative. The motivation is that self-driven force, which influences certain behaviors. All these represent factors played by psychology in health.

With a lifespan perspective, it is possible to argue that illness and health are directly associated with mortality. This shows the distinct patterns across a lifespan. Ageing for instance is directly linked to the state of health and effects on demand for health care. Moreover, ageing and developmental processes indirectly influence a number of issues of concern to health psychologists (Van Den Akker, 2012 p. 48). Such issues may include prevention of illnesses and health promotion, treatment of chronic and acute diseases, illness behavior and the experience of an illness. The major concern of the development of a lifespan is to comprehend the nature of the <https://assignbuster.com/health-psychology-essay-samples/>

change, which humans experience throughout the Lifecycle: from birth to death (Lerner, 2003 p. 50).

The bio psychosocial perspective is a new way of thinking about psychological health. It involves viewing Psychological health as the result of a combination of factors which also include biological features, such as genetic predisposition, behavioral features such as health beliefs, lifestyle and stress and social condition such as influence by culture and family relations (Baum, Revenson and Singer, 2012 p. 102).

Health psychology based on the gender perspective may be seen on a mortality view. For instance, the life expectancy of a woman in the west being greater than that of men. Different behaviours between males and females are observed, such as when quitting smoking, different problems arise between the two.

In health psychology, a number of methods are used. These sources are dependent on where the information has come from, how it is sampled and the instruments used in data collection. An instance is qualitative psychological research where the findings are not arrived at by statistical or any quantitative procedures. Quantitative psychological research is where the findings result from numerical modelling, and statistics. There are three major types of research in health psychology.

Co relational research

Descriptive research

Experimental research

Co relational research means testing statistical relationships between variables. Data is usually collected from different variables. Descriptive research on the other hand is used to describe the features of either a

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phenomenon or population that is under study. In this type of research, descriptive statistics are used to review the data (Brannon, Feist and Updegraff 2013, p. 79). Finally, experimental research entails carrying out an orderly procedure, with the goals of refuting, verifying or discovering how valid a hypothesis is. Experiments usually provide insight into the cause and effect by making practical what result occurs when a certain factor is manipulated (French, 2010 p. 34). Experimental research can also be used to respond to a “ what-if” question, without unveiling any expectations concerning what the experiment will uncover, while studying health psychology. Longitudinal study design, can be described as a correctional review study that involves continual observation of similar variations over long periods, often decades. People with similar characteristics are compared, making this type of study more accurate. Cross-sectional study design is a type of study that involves mixing of people of different ages and examining them over the same period of time. Psychologists use this method to examine how people of different ages perform or behave towards certain functions.

For more information on research on health Psychology, it is important to note that there are also research designs and data collection methods such as case studies, archival research, computer simulation, content analysis, observational study and among others.

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