

How does affect effect health article review

[Health & Medicine](#), [Stress](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Review of “ Resilience and Vulnerability to Daily Stressors Assessed via Diary Methods” by David M. Almeida.

In his article “ Resilience and Vulnerability to Daily Stressors Assessed via Diary Methods,” David Almeida defines daily stressors as “ routine challenges of day-to-day living, such as everyday concerns of work, caring for other people, and commuting between work and home. They may also refer to more unexpected small occurrences – such as arguments with children, unexpected work deadlines, and malfunctioning computers – that disrupt daily life” (Almeida, 2005). Almeida also distinguishes between these daily stressors and major events that occur in peoples’ lives. The major events are far less frequent and therefore probably have less of an impact on one’s health than the minor stressors due to their infrequency. Another distinction made between the two is that the minor stressors spike arousal or psychological distress and also impair emotional and physical functioning and while the events accumulate, they can lead to persistent frustration, irritation, and eventually lead to serious stress reactions that can include anxiety and depression. The less frequent major stressors can trigger physiological arousal that is suffered over a prolonged period of time.

The article also does identify that some people are more influenced by daily stressors than are others. These stressors are unpredictable and usually come from routine circumstances of a person’s usual routine. The level of how these stressors has been more able to be studied and measured than before due to some recent changes and improvements in how the stressors are measured as well as changes in design study. One of these changes allows for researchers to be able to identify and interpret personal meanings

and the attachments that they had to the individuals. Another change involves socio-demographic and personal characteristics to be included for both group and individual differences.

When measuring the stressors, some of the objective characteristics that were measured included type, such as workload at the job and tension; frequency; and objective severity, which is the degree that the average person finds the stressor to be unpleasant. The subjective elements of the study included the commitment the person had to the issue causing stress as well as the severity of the stress influencing the person.

Since the daily diary method has been developed, researchers are better able to identify accurate results since respondents include repeated measures into their recordings. Individuals include in their diary not only the stressors that they experienced, but also emotions, behaviors, and physical symptoms on these days. Paper and pencil diaries are thought to be ineffective due to participants not being compliance with entries being completed at the proper times, but by using the internet, digital devices, and telephone interviews, compliance is recorded along with detailed information. Respondents are allowed to skip questions that they find irrelevant and include details where desired.

When conducting research, using some of the information to ask the person details, a researcher is also able to rule out some of the environmental stressors. Limitations that this study was able to overcome by its design included that previous samples were small and the results were therefore not able to be generalized. Instead, this study was able to solicit a wide array of participants from across the nation. Previous studies focused on one

variable and this one was able to focus on multiple variables and socio-demographic components. Lastly, previous studies were limited since the checklists were self-administered by the participants and there was no range measured, just whether or not the stressor had occurred. In this study the expert surveyors were able to code responses by both content and severity. The findings included the following trends: respondents in the age groups of 25-39 years and 40-59 years of age were more likely to experience daily stress than older participants. Men's stressors were more likely about work and women's about the home and family. The more educated the person was, the fewer physical imparities were associated with the stress. The more daily and ongoing difficulties the individual faced, the higher was the reaction to stress (Almeida, 2005).

Evaluation of " Resilience and Vulnerability to Daily Stressors Assessed via Diary Methods" by David M. Almeida.

There are many studies on major stressors and their impact on the physical, emotional, and mental health of peoples' lives. But, as Almeida points out, these events are usually far and few between for most people. Instead, it is more common for people to have to cope with the daily stresses of life. His study does an excellent job of identifying many of these stressors and also trying to evaluate their severity. The study does lack, however, and focus or direction on methods to cope with these stressors. These would be a good topic for further research.

It is common to hear someone say that they are experiencing a " stressful day" or " a stressful week." Almeida does an excellent job of differentiating between these daily stressors and the stresses that are chronic, such as

caring for a sick relative or facing a difficult financial situation due to job loss. He also does identify some of the more trivial aspects of daily life, such as an argument or a computer malfunction, as a stressor and does not downplay it for what it is. These occurrences do cause great stress for certain individuals. The stress from these events, although may last for a shorter period of time, due to their frequent reoccurrence, are possibly more likely to do more harm to a person's physical, mental, and emotional well-being. This insight is excellent realization for the average person to realize that the seemingly little disruptions in daily life, when they seem overwhelming, looming, and large, that they really are having a significant impact on one's life. This validation of the stress being significant can help change the focus and realization of how an individual is able to view a situation.

Almeida also explores multiple factors when assessing both the resilience and vulnerability of a person and the daily stress process used by that individual. It is addressed in the article that different people handle the stressors of life more easily than others. Through the improved research design methods, the author is able to bring significance in how the difference in data collection can now enable researcher to study how personal meanings are attached to the stressors and how this influences a person's well-being while also identifying how differing personal characteristics and socio-demographics are some of the reasons why people process daily stressors in different ways. The author does well in explaining these differences to the lay-person and it does appear that the differences in this new model of study enables the researchers to gather data in a much more advanced form with far greater details than in previous studies.

Almeida also explains the daily diary method used in this study. He explains how it enables the respondents to record repeated responses throughout the day of the same and different, varying stressors. This different type and more intricate reporting system is definitely a way in which researchers can use information gathered in more complex and targeted ways to analyze results. Also, by being able to reduce the number of distortions of the recorded data, the results will be more accurate. Almeida's explanation of the significance of these changes is described well in a clear, coherent, and concise manner.

The way the article breaks down information about gender, age, and socio-demographics is also well done. There are two charts included in the article. Both are well-designed, clear, and easy for a lay person to be able to read and interpret the data. Additionally, Almeida explains each of the charts in a clear manner which does not insult the reader's intelligence (Almeida, 2005).

In all, the article is well-written. The study was well-designed. It provided a great deal of information within its seven pages of text. It does explain its limitations and also suggests further avenues of study on this subject. This is an author that I would read again and use his material for my further research on this topic. A suggestion for future research includes the study of the allosteric load, or the biological ability to change and adapt to stressors.

Review of “ Positive Affect and Health” by Sheldon Cohen and Sarah Pressman.

Although the effects of negative emotions and stressors, such as depression, hostility, and anxiety have been the subjects of frequent studies, the positive

affective styles are not given as much press when literature is written. In the article "Positive Affect and Health," by Sheldon Cohen and Sarah Pressman, it is the effects of peoples' positive affect that is studied.

The study was conducted from a laboratory at Carnegie Mellon University in which 334 adults, who volunteered to participate in the study, were telephoned 7 times during a 3 week time period. The interview process rated 9 positive and 9 negative adjectives to represent the feelings of the participants over the previous few days. The 9 positive adjectives included "lively, energetic, happy, cheerful, at ease, and calm." Some of the 9 negative adjectives included "sad, depressed, nervous, and hostile." The authors did not include the other 5 negative adjectives used in their work. The positive and negative attributes were then averaged over each 7 day period to create an average of the attributes.

Other evidence in other studies reviewed for this paper indicate that people with a higher positive affect report that their general health is better as well as, within the elderly population, fewer incidents and illnesses usually associated with that age group. Patients with chronic ailments, such as rheumatoid arthritis and fibromyalgia, also demonstrate that they handle the pain better and report it as being less severe if they have a positive outlook on their health and their lives.

It is also reported that there are interventions that an individual can make to improve one's positive affect. Making and maintaining social ties with positive people helps individuals follow and then model positive behaviors. Having more diverse and more numerous social ties also have been demonstrated to reduce mortality. Another factor in this same area is that

people with positive affects use their energy to explore, create, and maintain a broader social network which expands their physical, intellectual, and social resources.

Suggestions for future research include being able to differentiate between dimensions of affect. Examples of this include activated vs. inactivated and determining if negative affect and positive affect have independent associations with physical health outcomes (Cohen & Pressman, 2006).

Evaluation of “ Positive Affect and Health” by Sheldon Cohen and Sarah Pressman.

People who maintain a positive affect have not been studied with the intensity of people who have a negative effect. This being the case, the author chose to study the positive affect type people and complete a comparison and contrasting paper of the two different modes. The paper is clear, concise, and is easy to read. There is no technical jargon. Any word that the lay reader may not be familiar with is explained. Although the concept is that of a higher-level study, the writing is done on a level that is not insulting to the reader but instead in a manner that a non-psychologist person who just has an interest in the topic would be able to read and comprehend with ease.

The article studied several interesting factors and relations about a person's positive affect. It is a different article in that it captures these specific elements. The associations that are discussed are comparing positive affect to one's lifespan, how one fight or succumb to illness when exposed, how well one survives a life-threatening disease, and reporting pain symptoms. The issue of mortality is handled by using autobiographical writing samples.

The results are skewed since the average respondent tends to be older than the median age of the study group. Positive emotional health was shown to increase one's lifespan. The biggest indicator of change is that if an elderly person who has a positive affect is institutionalized, their likelihood to die increases. This would be a good topic for further research. Also studied was that children who have been identified as gifted and had a positive affect were more likely to be facing death 65 years later. Again, this would be an interesting topic for further evaluation.

The method of studying illness provides a controlled but perceptually necessary risk to the respondents. Being exposed to a cold virus seldom is a high risk, but it did enable the researchers to identify how the body might fight illness. All in all, this was probably a good choice for demonstrating this particular area of study. The results were as anticipated, the people with the higher positive affect usually fought off the cold virus. To study life-threatening illnesses, other research was viewed and analyzed by the authors. With these cases, a higher positive affect, the better the survival rate and the better the recovery progresses. It would be unethical to subject the study group participants to such a tragedy, so the authors had no choice but to go outside of their research group to find this information, but they did tie it in well with their study.

As anticipated, better health in general, less complaints of pain, and fewer negative health symptoms are attributed to the participants that have the higher positive affect. On the opposite side, those with negative affect reported more symptoms of illness, pain, and had poorer general health. The authors then broke this down specifically to people with rheumatoid arthritis

and fibromyalgia. In both of these instances, self-reporting of the level of pain is how doctors evaluate and treat the patients. A positive affect meant less pain and a negative affect was associated with increased pain.

The study did cite limitations with the existing literature. Emotions are hard to judge and classify as positive and negative at times due to their subjective nature. The authors do remark that this subjectivity can be lessened if standard measures to rate one's health were used. This is a good perception of how to fix a problem that the researchers noticed during their study.

Additionally noted was that health practices and some positive changes might help to increase positive affect in some participants, both those with positive and negative affect. Studying the stress hormones cortisol, norepinephrine, and epinephrine and perhaps taking steps to stabilize them in people with negative affect may help increase their positive affect.

Another aspect of society that may skew the results is that healthcare providers may pay closer attention to individuals with a positive effect, which would increase the level of care received, and enable them to be receiving better care than those with negative affect.

The articles do have components that support each other. The one that is most apparent is that people who have a positive affect are potentially going to be able to handle the stressors that they come across in life than those who have a negative outlook on life and circumstances associated with it.

People who have a positive affect are more likely to be able to "roll with it" or "go with the flow" as their more mild-mannered style and temperament is more permitting to accepting these changes as they occur and deal better with the circumstances at hand. On the other hand, when a person has a

negative effect, that person is likely to be able to handle the daily stressors in a way in which they ' just roll off of their back." Instead, these stressors, which may seem small and insignificant to an outsider looking in, seem great to this person and require an enormous amount of energy to survive and overcome the issue at hand. It would be comparable to the saying " making a mountain out of a molehill."

People with a positive affect may also see many stressors for others as just normal life events that need to be dealt with before moving on to the next thing. No matter how great the challenge, they realize the significance and importance, but do not necessarily view it as a big, negative occurrence. An example could be a wife caring for her husband after a stroke. Although the husband may have actively helped around the house and earned an income before the stroke, after it he is unable to do many things for himself, let alone work outside of the home. The wife now faces an increased workload at home in the day to day maintenance, she is acting as a caregiver for her spouse, and also is continuing to work to provide income. A wife with a negative affect may perceive all of these to be extra burdens that she must bear and needs to deal with every day. Whereas, the wife with the positive outlook looks at the blessing she had during the years her husband helped out around the house when he could, that he is still with her despite needing physical assistance, and that she is still able to work to earn the needed income. Affect influences the perceptions in the same situation.

This may also relate to the socio-demographic tie that is mentioned in both articles. The better educated and the higher the standard of living for a person (up to a certain point), the more likely that person is to have a

positive affect and be able to more easily handle the daily life stressors.

Using the same example as above, the wife with the positive affect may be in a career she enjoys rather than a job to earn a paycheck. She may be able to afford to have outside help in the home. The wife with the lower income needs to worry about how the bills will get paid with less money coming in and exhausting herself due to the new demands on her physically.

The articles support each other rather well. Both are also insightful as to areas for further study. There is great consistency within the research. Even the use of phone interviewing overlapped. The correlations help to demonstrate that there is validity among the results of both studies (Cohen & Pressman, 2006).

After reviewing these two articles, it is apparent that it is possible for people to help or hurt their health in ways that may have been believed to be out of their control. By making healthy changes in outlook, supplements, regulating hormones, and learning relaxation techniques, people can improve their affect. Additionally, when necessary, it may be of vital importance to reduce exposure to daily stressors or work to find a way to manage them to not be so overwhelming. Positive measures, such as a healthy diet and exercise, really do improve mental, emotional, and physical health (O'Connor, Conner, McMillan, & Ferguson, 2009).

References

Almeida, D. M. (2005). Resilience and vulnerability to daily stressors assessed via diary methods. *14(2)*, 64-68.

Cohen, S. & Pressman S. D. (2006). Positive affect and health. *15(3)*, 198-

<https://assignbuster.com/how-does-affect-effect-health-article-review/>

205.

O'Connor, D. B., PhD, Conner, M., Jones, F., McMillan, B., & Ferguson, E.

(2009). Exploring

the benefits of conscientiousness: An investigation of the role of daily stressors and

health behaviors. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 37(2), 184-96. doi:

[http://dx. doi. org/10. 1007/s12160-009-9087-6](http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s12160-009-9087-6)