

The connection between mind and body research paper examples

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Modern science has proven that there is a significant connection between body and mind. Mind and cognition are very important for our emotional functioning in everyday activities. Also, they represent the base for psychological health. However, when it comes to physical health, some scientists are not convinced that mind and thoughts can be responsible for development of ailments. This field has waked up curiosity in many researchers and became very popular during the last few decades.

Psychological wellbeing is very dependent on cognitive style and emotional interpretation of reality. If someone has pessimistic cognitive style, he or she will see everything in a negative manner and the person will later become unmotivated, which can eventually lead to depression. How is this connected to our body? It is shown that depression is associated with low levels of neurotransmitter called serotonin. In individuals with positive emotions and positive anticipations level of serotonin is stable, while in those who always anticipate negative outcomes this level decreases. This means that the way of thinking can bring changes to the amount of certain neurotransmitters (Dayan and Huys, 2008). It is important to realize that there are some psychological dysfunctions that are learned through life and especially during childhood. Russian scientist, Pavlov, has discovered the way individuals learn to be afraid from stimuli that are objectively not threatening. He explained how phobias are learned by simple association between stimuli and emotion of fear. The reaction of fear on objects that normally do not cause fear is probably the result of new neurological

connection in our brain (Pavlov in Clark and Squire, 1998). This has been further proved by Watson's experiment with little Albert, who learned, in experimental situation, to be afraid of animals and every other stimuli that were similar to them (Harris, 1979). It seems that individuals learn these emotional patterns and follow them later in life. These findings helped scientist to understand better the connection between mind and inner bodily sensations that individuals experience in certain stressful situations. This showed that objective reality is actually not that important as the interpretation of that reality. The meaning that a person gives to certain situation will determine his or her behavior and what sensations in the body will be experienced.

The connection between mind and body is very complex and entangled. There are scientists that still doubt that there is a connection between emotions and ailments. This is due to the inability to undoubtedly prove that the state of mind can cause healing of certain illnesses or contribute to healing process. The functioning of immune system is very important for general health and it is connected with emotions. Today, scientist can measure how immune system responds on different types of stress. Positive emotional state can strengthen and stimulate defense systems in the body, while stressful events in life can weaken them. Emotions can probably debilitate immune system. Scientist reported that there is a connection between depression, anxiety and negative emotional state on one hand and diseases that affect immune system, such as asthma, cancer and rheumatoid arthritis on the other (Clarke and Currie, 2009). One of the first modern scientists who proved that mind and emotions can affect body was

George Solomon, professor of psychiatry at UCLA. In 1969, during his work at Stanford University, he published one article in magazine Annals of New York Academy of Sciences in which he explained what effect can stress and other psychological factors have on immune system. This and similar findings contributed to the development of specific neuroscience called neuroimmunology.

The influence of emotions on our general health is called psychological effect. This influence can be explained by next illustration. Employee stayed late at work to finish his project for tomorrow. At one point he realized that he is very sleepy and can't work as effectively as he should. He remembered that his secretary holds instant coffee in one of the drawers and looked for it. When he found it he swallowed several spoons of this coffee and waited for a while. After ten minutes he felt stronger since caffeine mobilized sugar in his blood. After this he was able to be concentrated because the nervous system performed its stimulation. He went to the toilet because he knew that caffeine has diuretic effect. This feeling held him for three hours which was enough for him to complete his project. Tomorrow he told his secretary that he ate her coffee and that it helped him to stay awake. She then started laughing and told him that the coffee he ate was without caffeine. This psychological effect is usually used in trials with new drugs where one group of patients receives the right medication and the other group something that only seems to be medicine, but actually it is not. It is surprising that these false medications, called placebo, can have significant effect on individuals. In short, thoughts and feelings have strong effect on mind and then mind influences the body.

Based on evidences and discussions that are mentioned above the conclusion cannot be clearer. Mind can have significant influence on the body and can contribute, if not cause, to the development of illnesses. It is known that there are techniques that can have positive effect on our inner balance, emotions and thoughts. One of the most famous is yoga. Individuals who practice yoga report that their emotional life is more stable and thus their general physical health is improved. It is also very important to maintain positive cognitive style and interpret events in life as positive as possible. Laughter and physical activity encourage production of endorphin, neurotransmitter that is responsible for feeling of happiness. Individuals who exercise regularly and laugh are more resistant to stress and are rarely affected by psychosomatic diseases. Positive thinking, exercise and laughter will not only boost immune system, but also keep quality of life on a high level.

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