

Concepts of health behavior



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Health and Behavior: Research, Practice, and Policy Health and Behavior: Research, Practice, and Policy The relationship between health and behavior is presently one of the main medical subjects in research, medical practice and policy establishment. Based on empirical and clinical studies, the behavior of the patient has significant effects on his/her health. There are different points that can support the impact of behavior on health of an individual. There is one main concern though, the complexity of the relationship resulting to the lack of organization in the medical methodologies, disease management techniques and interventions. Views regarding the interaction between the two concepts come from all directions. Thus, the initial action of health professionals and authorities is to define and categorize the said relationship between health and behavior. There are important terms to define in the study of the relationship between health and behavior. The aspects to be defined to be able to achieve a deeper understanding of the relationship between health and behavior include behavior, health and risk factors. Behavior, also referred to as biobehavioral sciences can be defined as the aspect of the field of study related to the empirical data and analyses of animal and human behavior with the inclusion of the different types of sciences pertinent to the study such as neuroanatomy, neurology, neurochemistry, endocrinology, immunology, psychology, psychiatry, epidemiology, ethnology, sociology, anthropology and new interdisciplinary fields such as behavioral genetics, psychoneuroimmunology, and behavioral medicine. Health is another aspect of the study which is defined as the state of wellness. In terms of the definition related to behavior, it is defined as the state of resistance or recovery from different types of issues that can affect the body such as

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disease, illness, and intervention. Risk factors comprise another aspect of the study which can be defined as the different levels of influences that can affect the health behavior of a person such as the family, the social networks and the organizations situated within the community (Glanz, Rimer and Viswanath, 2008; Institute of Medicine US, 2001). Behavior used to be a neglected factor in the assessment of health, but due to empirical evidences on the significant effects of behavior on the health conditions of the population. Examples of health conditions affected by behavior of the patient toward their wellness or toward the treatments include chronic disease such as heart disease, cancer, lung diseases, and diabetes. Behavioral factors had been linked to these diseases specifically tobacco use, diet and activity patterns, alcohol consumption, sexual behavior, and avoidable injuries due to their significant role in the increase of mortality rate in the population (Glanz, Rimer and Viswanath, 2008). One example that can be cited is the case of cardiovascular diseases. Based on studies, included in the risk factors for the diseases such as heart problems and hypertension, are tobacco smoking and sedentary life style. A decline in the number of cardiovascular diseases had been observed when risk factors were resolved such as change of lifestyle and prevention of smoking (Brannon and Feist, 2009). Due to the observed significant improvements in the statistics of diseases and health conditions due to the consideration of the behavioral aspect in health studies, the medical field considered the relationship between health and behavior as one of the important factors in the war to maintain health and fight diseases. Behavioral influence on risk factors and causes and the use of behavioral interventions were recognized and included in the medical field specifically in research, clinical applications and

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