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Transcendence From Patient-Centered Care to Person-Centered Care: A Study of the Biopsychosocial Impact of Personality on Health

Fahlgren E, Nima AA, Archer T, Garcia D. Person-centered osteopathic practice: patients' personality (body, mind and soul) and health (ill-being and well-being). *Peer J*. 2015;3:e1349. doi:10.7717/peerj.1349.

Osteopathic physicians have often seen the effect that biopsychosocial stressors can have on a patient's health and well-being. There are few studies, however, that examine how personality influences health outcomes. Understanding how personality can affect health care and engage patients in self-care is crucial to moving health care forward.

Thirty osteopathic practitioners in Sweden who were members of the Swedish Osteopathic Association agreed to voluntarily participate in the data collection of their patient population. Swedish researchers examined the link between personality and health in this study of 524 patients.

The study measured personality well-being and ill-being, and dysfunction from the presenting problem. Personality was measured by a survey that assessed the 4 temperament dimensions (harm avoidance, novelty seeking, reward dependence, and persistence) and the 3 character

dimensions (self-directedness, cooperativeness, and self-transcendence).

Well-being and ill-being data were collected via self-reported tests using 6- or 7-point Likert scales that measured temperament, character inventory, harmony in life, satisfaction with life, resiliency, positive and negative affect, and stress.

The results of the surveys showed that patients' personalities explained the variance of all well-being measures and most ill-being measures. Self-directedness (ie, self-determination and self-sufficiency) was the character dimension most positively related to all well-being measures and negatively related to ill-being. Harm avoidance, on the other hand, showed an inverse relationship. Self-transcendence was associated positively with harmony in life, resilience, positive affect, and energy, implying that the soul aspect of a patient's personality, which allows one to have a sense of being part of something bigger than the self, is associated with well-being.

Andrew Taylor Still, MD, DO, viewed the body as a triune being and believed that body, mind, and spirit¹ were all vital to the care of the patient. This study suggests that the biopsychosocial aspect of care is important to the osteopathic medical profession and indicates that supporting resiliency and self-directedness in patients is key to a person-centered approach. Future studies are needed to clarify the permanence of these personality traits and to demonstrate how health care professionals can coach patients to become more resilient and self-aware. (doi:10.7556/jaoa.2016.137)

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