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Tiedekunta-Fakultet-Faculty Faculty of Social Sciences		Laitos-Institution-Department Department of Social Psychology	
Tekijä-Författare-Author Kiviruusu, Olli			
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Tiivistelmä-Referat-Abstract <p>This study examined whether chronic illness associates with depression and psychosocial resources, including coping styles, locus of control and social support, among young adults. Additionally, the role of psychosocial resources in the association of chronic illness and depression was explored.</p> <p>The cross-sectional data used in this study were drawn from the latest follow-up phase of a Finnish cohort study. At the time of this follow-up in 1999 subjects were aged 32 years. For the analyses two groups were constructed: (1) a chronic illness group (n=257) consisting of participants reporting at least one chronic somatic illness (e.g. diabetes, asthma, migraine); and (2) a healthy control group (n=664) consisting of participants without any long-term somatic illness. Depressive symptoms were measured using a Finnish modification of the short 13-item Beck Depression Inventory. The checklist of coping dispositions were factoranalysed and the four factors were interpreted as: 1) cognitive-focused coping; 2) emotion-focused coping; 3) seeking social support; and 4) active problem-solving. Measures of social support covered social integration (married/cohabiting, the size of social networks) and perceived social support (availability of and satisfaction with support).</p> <p>The results showed that the chronically ill males were more depressed than healthy males. They also used more emotion-focused coping, had more external locus of control and were less often married or cohabiting than healthy males. The association between chronic illness and depression among males attenuated when the effects of emotion-focused coping disposition and locus of control were taken into account, indicating a possible mediational role of these resources. Among females no differences were found in depression or psychosocial resources between the chronically ill and healthy controls. Only a few buffering effects of psychosocial resources emerged: an active problem-solving coping disposition among the chronically ill males and perceived social support among the chronically ill females seemed to act as buffers against depression.</p> <p>The results indicated a significant gender disparity in the association between chronic illness and depression among young adults: males, but not females, report more symptoms of depression when affected by chronic illness. Psychosocial resources may play an important role in explaining the chronic illness - depression association, and especially in understanding any gender differentials in this relationship. With regard to prevention, chronically ill young adult males should be recognized as a risk group for depression that would probably benefit from guidance in learning more active coping skills and maintaining a sense of personal control in facing chronic physical illness.</p>			
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