

Methods Seventy-three female and 86 male patients of 45 years mean age (range 18–67 years) suffering from obesity assessed the extent of feeling humiliated by weight-teasing using a Visual-Analogue-Scale. The patients additionally were tested with the Short-Form-36 (SF-36), the Life-Satisfaction-Questionnaire (FLZ) and the Body-Assessment-Questionnaire (FBek).

Results About one third of the sample stated to have experienced weight-teasing. Concerning the extent of humiliation reactionary to weight-teasing, significant differences in gender, WHO-obesity-classes and fat-distribution types were found. The findings as well show significant relationships between the extent of humiliation and five SF-36-scales, four dimensions of the FLZ or three FBek-scales, respectively.

Conclusions Obesity-class, fat-distribution type and gender are responsible for a higher or lower extent of humiliation, respectively. Patients, who are at high risk to feel humiliated by weight-teasing should be offered special interventions concerning this matter.

Cognitive emotion regulation, goal disturbance and psychological distress in people infected with HIV

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Objectives The aim of the present study was to explore the relationships between cognitive emotion regulation, goal disturbance and psychological distress in people infected with HIV. A second objective was to examine whether the current HIV phase was related to cognitive emotion regulation, goal disturbance or psychological distress.

Methods Respondents were contacted through organizations for HIV positive people. The organizations distributed questionnaires to their members. In total, 43 respondents completed the questionnaires, which included the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ; Garnefski, Kraaij, & Spinhoven, 2002), the Goal Facilitation Inventory (GFI: Ter Doest, Maes, & Gebhardt, in press), the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (Zigmond & Snaith, 1983), and the Medical Outcomes Study Short-form General Health Survey (MOS-SF 12; Wu & Rubin, 1992).

Results The amount of goal disturbance and three cognitive emotion regulation strategies (i.e., Positive Refocusing, Rumination and Catastrophizing) were found to be related to psychological distress. The current phase of HIV was not related to cognitive emotion regulation, goal disturbance or psychological distress.

Conclusions The present study suggests that it may be advisable to include aspects of cognitive emotion regulation and goal disturbance in programs which focus on teaching people how to handle being infected with HIV, regardless of the phase of HIV they are in.

Can the disadvantages of online support groups be disproved?

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Background People often turn to support groups, when they find themselves in stressful circumstances, such as serious health conditions. With the increase in the availability and popularity of internet, the possibility has arisen to join online support groups. A number of studies have tried to classify potential disadvantages posed by these groups, like the lack of control of the quality of the information that is exchanged and the concern that the exchange within the group might include

socially inappropriate remarks. However it appears that there is little research to actually substantiate the potential disadvantages of online support groups.

Objectives To explore to what extent potential disadvantages of online support groups, as mentioned in the literature, actually occur.

Methods We have downloaded a random sample of 1500 messages exchanged in publicly available discussion groups for patients with breast cancer, rheumatoid arthritis and fibromyalgia. At the moment we are in the process of analyzing the content of the postings by two independent raters. A coding system, consisting of 22 unique coding categories, was developed to detect the potential disadvantages of online support groups. These coding categories were classified in four broad groupings: “disadvantages due to online asynchronous communication”, “quality of the information”, “disadvantages uttered by health professionals” and “negative postings”. In addition each posting is coded for demographic information of the sender, as well as for the topics of the posting.

Results The final results will be presented at the conference. Preliminary findings suggest that only in a minor proportion of the postings analyzed, potential disadvantages were coded as present. In addition it appears that a major part of the postings contained off topic remarks. Popular health related topics were “restrictions that people experience as a consequence of being ill” and “regular medications”.

Diagnosing psychologically oncological diseases: The cognitive orientation approach*

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Objectives The major purpose is to present a new approach to studying psychological correlates of cancer. It is grounded in the cognitive orientation theory (S. Kreitler & H. Kreitler) for predicting and changing behaviors, which has generated a set of methodological tools for identifying motivationally relevant cognitive contents relating specifically to particular disorders.

Methods Two studies will be presented briefly, one dealing with colon cancer patients, the second with prostate cancer patients. In each study there were two groups of participants – patients and healthy controls. The number of participants was in study I 129 patients and 101 controls (of both genders), and in study II 120 patients and 98 controls (only males). Both groups completed a cognitive orientation questionnaire assessing beliefs of four types (about self, rules and norms, reality, and goals) in regard to themes relevant for the diseases, identified in pretests.

Results In each of the studies, discriminant analysis demonstrated that the four belief types predicted significantly group membership of patients and controls.

Conclusions The findings show that there are specific personality correlates for each group of cancer patients. These correlates may be considered as risk factors but may also be used for structuring therapeutic interventions.

Effects and possible moderators of tailoring health messages on lifestyle

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Objectives The aim of this study was to examine the effectiveness of a computer-tailored intervention aimed at increasing physical activity, fruit, vegetable intake, decreasing fat intake and smoking cessation and to test for possible moderators (Body Mass Index (BMI), sex, level of education, level of motivation, number of behaviours meeting recommendation).

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