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WHOLISTIC NEWS REVIEWS:

Traditional, Complementary, Alternative, and Psycho-Social Modalities of Treatment

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Coping strategies of women with breast cancer

Dr. Fotios Anagnostopoulos and colleagues studied 180 breast cancer patients assessing how they coped with health threats compared to a control group with benign disease. The discovered that breast cancer patients rarely attributed self-blame for getting ill compared to healthy controls. What they did have in common with healthy controls or those with benign disease were the utilization of such common coping strategies, which included self-isolation, passive acceptance, seeking social support, problem-focused coping, positive reappraisal, distancing and wishful thinking. Anagnostopoulos partly concludes by writing, "Our results may suggest that under the conditions of a cancer diagnosis, patients do not tend to assign responsibility on themselves and their character, since they possibly need to avoid guilt, low self-esteem and social distance, and to maintain a potential to invest in the adjustment process."

Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics 2004; 73, 35-43

Taking A Spiritual History

Dr. Harold G. Koenig shares the results of a multi-center survey of 4765 physicians' attitudes toward spirituality in clinical practice and found that 85% of those surveyed stated that physicians should be aware of a patients spiritual beliefs. However, Koenig goes on to say that in other studies, it has been shown that fewer than 10% of physicians actually consider their patient's spiritual needs-and that includes those in the dying process. Koenig goes on to say that it is important for physician to learn their patients' spiritual beliefs for the following reasons: First, spirituality and religion is the most common ways patients cope with medical illness; Second, religious beliefs influence medical decisions on behalf of the patient and their Family; Third, a community of faith serves as a primary support system for patients; Fourth, patients surveyed in hospitals across the country consistently cite spiritual aspects of care

having the highest need for improvement; And, unmet spiritual needs manifesting as "religious struggle," is one predictor of increased mortality among patients following discharge.

Journal of the American Medical Association 2004, 291, 2881

Psychoeducational group intervention impacting mood and glycemic control for diabetics

Dr. Linda Trozzolino and colleagues report that after 48 adults with diabetes and visual impairments participated in a 12-week psychoeducational group therapy (consisting of 10 sessions of cognitive-behavioral group therapy, one session of basic diabetes self-care information and one session of dietary information), the results showed a statistically significant improvement of glycemic control that was correlated with decreased depression resulting from the therapy component as opposed to the self-care educational component that did not statistically correlate with improved glycemic control.

Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness 2003, 97, 230

The use of hypnosis and existential psychotherapy with end-stage patients

Dr. Alex Iglesias reports the results of clinical application of hypnosis and existential therapy for three end-stage terminally ill cancer patients. Death anxiety, existential isolation and existential meaninglessness were addressed while utilizing both classical and Ericksonian hypnosis techniques. After six sessions, previously intractable symptoms such as pain, nausea and vomiting remitted and the medical management techniques previously tried and failed now began to work. Iglesias partly concludes by writing, "Both pain and the side effects of medical treatments become part of a life that many dying patients refer to as purgatory. Hypnosis can help alleviate these symptoms and offer these patients some dignity in the final stage of life. Hypnotic approaches emphasizing dissociative techniques, pain management strategies, and methods for alleviating the side effects of chemotherapy have been found efficacious in alleviating suffering in the terminally ill."

American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis 2004, 46, 201

Mindfulness meditation and heart disease-results of a pilot study

Dr. Jacalyn McComb and colleagues conduct a pilot study to see the effectiveness of Jon Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness-based stress reduction program (MBSR) over an eight week period, two hours per week, on the anxiety levels of 20 women diagnosed with heart disease. The results showed a statistically significant lowering of state-anxiety and negative emotional repression for the treatment group compared to the control group. McComb concludes by writing ".Post-intervention assessments revealed significant differences between the treatment and control groups on scores of anxiety, emotional control, and reactive coping in women diagnosed with heart disease. Based on these preliminary data, the MBSR program holds promise as a complementary therapy to traditional health care for individuals with heart disease."

Family and Community Health 2003, 26, 25

Childhood abuse and later medical disorders in women

Dr. Sarah Romans and colleagues examined whether adverse life events could play a role in the etiology of medical disorders with particular focus on childhood sexual abuse. The authors studied 477 New Zealand women, half of whom reported childhood sexual abuse and found that seven of 18 potentially relevant medical conditions increased in frequency with women who had experienced one or more types of abuse as children. These conditions included: chronic fatigue, bladder problems, headaches, asthma, diabetes and heart problems. Romans, et.al., partly conclude by writing, "Findings suggest relative specificity rather than a general vulnerability to psychosomatic conditions in women who have suffered abuses."

Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics 2002, 71, 141

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