Psychological Impacts on Resiliency in Older Adults

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Acknowledgements

National Institute on Aging
Health and Retirement Study (HRS)

No relevant disclosures
Do Psychological Factors Contribute to Resilience in Late Life?

- consider personality traits, self-related beliefs, and appraisals
- most research on factors linked to ill-being (deterioration)
- less on resilience (e.g., recovery, growth, maintenance)
Predictive Power of Personality Traits?

Characteristics of an individual’s behavior that are relatively enduring (consistent) across situations and over time

- **CONSCIENTIOUSNESS**: Tendency to be well-organized, disciplined, responsible, hardworking
- **NEUROTICISM**: …moody, worrying, nervous, tense, not calm
- **EXTRAVERSION**: …outgoing, friendly, lively, talkative
- **AGREEABLENESS**: …helpful, caring, sympathetic
- **OPENNESS**: …creative, imaginative, curious, broad-minded

AGS / NIA R13 Bedside to Bench Conference Series
Topic 2 Stress Tests and Biomarkers of Resilience
Bethesda, March 4-5, 2024
Predictive Power of Personality Traits

**CONSCIENTIOUSNESS**

Hi C predicts longevity

Lo N related to living longer; Hi N report more stress

**NEUROTICISM**

High rank-order stability in individual differences, but mean-level change over time with age…

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Most personality trait – biomarker research is cross-sectional: Associations are not explanations, indicate potential for resilience

Higher C associated with lower CRP & lower IL-6

Meta-analyses -- large population studies...\(^a\)

C may buffer and N may amplify higher IL-6 risk associated with low SES...\(^b\)

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How about Self-related Beliefs / Appraisals?

Dynamic evaluative and regulation processes and self-related beliefs involved in coping with life events and challenges

- PURPOSE IN LIFE
- SELF ESTEEM
- CONTROL BELIEFS / MASTERY
- PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT
- WILL TO LIVE
- EMOTION REGULATION
- OPTIMISM
- RELATIONSHIP QUALITY

Self-related Beliefs, Appraisals and Biomarkers?


Charles S.T. 2010 *Psychological Bulletin*, 136(6) 1068-1091
How do the psychological factors work?

Knowledge Gaps?

- *how, when, for whom, and under what conditions* do psychological factors play a role in resilience (recovery, growth, maintenance) over time?
Knowledge Gaps?

Is consideration of terminal decline important?