

Personality and health problems of elderly people

Abstract

Everybody may observe the influence of the psyche on the body, and the influence of the body on the psyche, in common every-day life. This mutual influence has been used by medicine for many ages and in many cultures. Research into the influence of psychosocial factors on one's health shows that the neurohormonal and immunological systems play a very important role.

Stress is considered to be the main pathogenic factor of psychosomatic diseases. However, we find differences in reactions of distinct people to the same stressor. This fact has become an inspiration to develop the salutogenetic model. The psyche is a very important factor in the functioning of an old person and it is best expressed by personality (... an individual shapes throughout his or her entire life) shaped throughout a person's whole life.

The goal of my research is to show the influence a senior's personality has on their health problems. I used two methods in the research. To study the personality of old people I used the NEOFFI questionnaire of Costa and McCrae. In order to inquire about the health problems of old people I used a questionnaire form I had prepared myself. It consists of twenty questions about the health of respondents. The research covered 100 people, 60 women and 40 men, between the age of 60 and 95 that is, at the old age.

As we can see in the research, personality has a very important influence on health problems of elderly people. However, diseases affecting those people are inevitable. Early diagnosis and proper treatment as well as help provided not only by specialized medical personnel but also by closest relatives or friends are very important.

Key words: *psychoneuroimmunology, health in the holistic-functional approach, psychosomatic diseases, personality*