

The effect of self-efficacy on patients' perceptions of general health: The mediating role of positive affect

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Extended Abstract

a) Background

At present, individuals have become more concerned about their health. They engage in various activities in order to maintain healthy living. Those health behaviors may impact on individuals' overall well-being and help lead a better and long life. An understanding of the factors that affect health and illness will guide individuals in choosing behaviors that promote healthy living.

b) Research problem

Among many factors, individuals' beliefs related to health seem to have an impact on their overall well-being. Research has suggested that psychological factors such as attitudes, beliefs and emotions, and social factors such as poverty may cause unhealthy behaviors that lead to chronic conditions (Schneiderman, 2004; Aspinawall & Franco Durán, 1999). Self-efficacy, one's belief about his or her ability to perform a recommended action, has been identified as an important factor in health promotion (Wu, Tang, & Kwok, 2004; Aspinawall & Franco Durán, 1999). Positive affect can be described as more long-lasting feelings present within emotions (Fredrickson, 2001). Positive feelings seem to have an effect on both mental and physical health. For example, positive feelings seem to broaden one's attention (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005) and improve psychological growth (Fredrickson et al., 2003). Additionally, positive affect is associated with longevity (e.g. Moskowitz, 2003). Studies have revealed a significant association between positive affect and valuing general health (Trankle & Haw, 2009). Life satisfaction can be defined as one's overall appraisal of various aspects of life domains such as self-esteem, career, interpersonal relationships and health (Suh, Diener, & Oishi, 1998). This study examined the effect of self-efficacy on valuing general health and the mediating role of positive affect. It further examined the link between valuing general health and life satisfaction and the mediating role of positive affect in this relationship.

c) Objectives

1. To examine the effect of self-efficacy on valuing general health
2. To examine the mediating effect of positive affect on the relationship between self-efficacy and valuing general health

3. To examine the effect of valuing general health on life satisfaction
4. To examine the mediating effect of positive affect on the link between valuing general health and life satisfaction

d) Research Methodology

Participants

The sample included 164 patients (62% females, 38% males, age range from 18 and 80) who attended the out-patient department and the clinics at a private hospital in Sri Lanka.

Materials

General health value scale: Individuals' beliefs about valuing general health were assessed with the 4-item general health value subscale in the Health Belief Model (HBM) (Trankle & Haw, 2009). Items were rated using a 4-point scale. Reliability for this scale was $\alpha = .61$

Positive and negative affect scale. Positive Affect and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) was used to measure individuals' affect. The scale consisted of 10 positive (e.g., interested) and 10 negative (e.g., upset) adjectives. They were rated using a 5-point scale. In this study, Reliability for the Positive Affect Scale was $\alpha = .87$ and for the Negative Affect Scale was $\alpha = .86$.

Self-efficacy scale: The 10-item Self-Efficacy Assessment Scale (Schwarzer, & Jerusalem, 1995) was used to assess self-efficacy. The items were rated on a 4-point Likert scale. Reliability for this scale was $\alpha = .70$.

Satisfaction with life scale: The five item Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) was used to measure overall life satisfaction of individuals. The items were rated using a 7-point scale. Reliability for this scale was $\alpha = .65$.

e) Key Findings

The Mediating Effect of Positive Affect on the Link between Self-efficacy and Valuing General Health

A hierarchical regression conducted to determine whether the effect of self-efficacy on valuing general health is mediated by positive affect, using the steps introduced by Baron and Kenny (1986). Self-efficacy was a significant predictor of valuing general health. Also, self-efficacy was significantly related to positive affect (mediating variable). When both self-efficacy and positive affect were entered into the equation predicting valuing general health, the relationship between self-efficacy and valuing general health was reduced ($r = .18$). Thus, the effect of self-efficacy on valuing general health was significantly

mediated by positive affect (see Table 1).

Table 1

Hierarchical Regression Models with Mediating Effect of Positive Affect on the Link between Self-efficacy and Valuing General Health (n=164)

Valuing general health			
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β
Predictors			
Step 1			
Self-efficacy	.33	.12	.22**
Positive Affect			
Step 2			
Self-efficacy	.68	.15	.34***
Valuing general health			
Step 3			
Self-efficacy	.18	.12	.12
Positive Affect	.22	.06	.30***

$R^2 = .05$ for step 1; $\Delta R^2 = .13$ for step 3 ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

The Mediating Effect of Positive Affect on the Link between Valuing General Health and Life Satisfaction

A hierarchical regression conducted to determine whether the valuing general health on life satisfaction is mediated by positive affect. Valuing general health significantly predicted life satisfaction and positive affect. When valuing general health and positive affect were entered into the equation predicting life satisfaction, the relationship between valuing general health and life satisfaction was reduced ($r = .29$). Thus, the effect of valuing general health on life satisfaction was significantly mediated by positive affect (see Table 2).

Table 2

Hierarchical Regression Models with Mediating Effect of Positive Affect on the Link between Valuing General Health and Life Satisfaction (n=164)

Life Satisfaction			
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β
Predictors			
Step 1			
Valuing general health	.45	.12	.28***
Positive Affect			
Step 2			
Valuing general health	.43	.10	.33***
Life Satisfaction			
Step 3			
Valuing general health	.29	.13	.18*
Positive Affect	.36	.10	.29***

$R^2 = .08$ for step 1; $\Delta R^2 = .15$ for step 3 * $p < .05$ *** $p < .001$

f) Conclusions

Self-efficacy significantly predicted valuing general health. The effect of self-efficacy on valuing general health was significantly mediated by positive affect. Also, valuing general health significantly predicted life satisfaction. The effect of valuing general health on life satisfaction was significantly mediated by positive affect.

This study will help individuals identify psychological factors such as self-efficacy and experience of positive affect that have significant impact on health and satisfaction. Particularly, it will be important for health professionals to motivate their clients to improve self-efficacy and to experience greater positive affect in order to gain satisfaction.

g) References

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