

## **Symposium S-D5**

### **New insights on the effects of traits on health: The important role of social processes**

**Friday, February 14, 2014, 3:30 PM - 4:45 PM, Room 9**

**Chair:** Lauren Human, University of British Columbia

**Co-Chair:** Joshua Jackson, Washington University in St. Louis

Both personality and social processes play an important role in physical health, but rarely are these processes examined simultaneously. This symposium showcases diverse approaches to taking social processes into account when examining how traits affect health-relevant outcomes. Together, these talks provide new insights for understanding pathways to better health.

#### **Being perceived accurately is associated with better inflammatory regulation in adolescents**

Lauren J. Human, Meanne Chan, Anita DeLongis, Laura Roy, Gregory E. Miller, Edith Chen  
*University of British Columbia; Northwestern University*

The tendency to be perceived accurately by others is associated with better psychological adjustment, but might accuracy also have implications for physical health? In this study we begin to address this question by examining whether adolescents who are seen more accurately by their parents have better inflammatory regulation. In a two-week daily diary study of 116 parent-adolescent dyads, we examined whether parental accuracy about their adolescent's daily demands and the positivity of their day was associated with regulation of the inflammatory response in terms of glucocorticoid (GC) sensitivity (the extent to which cortisol is able to dampen the production of inflammatory proteins) in adolescents. Adolescents who tended to be seen more accurately by their parents did indeed demonstrate greater glucocorticoid sensitivity. These results provide preliminary evidence that being accurately perceived by close others is associated with processes relevant to physical health.

#### **Trait rumination and cortisol responses: Associations across contexts, over time, and by gender**

Peggy M. Zoccola, Sally S. Dickerson

*Ohio University; University of California, Irvine*

Two studies tested the relationship between trait rumination and elevated cortisol, and whether this association is moderated by social context (social evaluative threat; SET), time of day, and gender. In Study 1, 117 students completed a SET laboratory stressor and five days of cortisol sampling. Trait rumination predicted greater cortisol responses to the SET stressor for women (but not men). Rumination also predicted different diurnal cortisol slopes for men and women. In Study 2, 144 students completed a SET or non-SET laboratory stressor. Cortisol was measured throughout the visit and evening. Higher trait rumination scores predicted greater cortisol responses overall, and evening cortisol was most elevated for female ruminators on the night of the evaluative stressor. Broadly, the relationship between rumination and cortisol depends upon SET, time of day, and gender. In particular, the combination of SET and ruminative tendencies may increase individuals risk of exposure to elevated cortisol concentrations.

#### **What your friends know that you don't: Friend rated personality predicts longevity 70 years later**

Joshua J. Jackson, Sarah M. Garrison, James J. Connolly, Madeleine Leveille  
*Washington University in St. Louis; Vanderbilt University; Connolly Consulting*

Personality traits predict who is likely to have healthier, longer lives -- sometimes decades in advance. However, the vast majority of these studies rely on self-reported personality. In this study we used the Kelly longitudinal study (Kelly & Conley, 1987) to investigate whether peer assessments of personality were associated with mortality over a span of 70 plus years. Between 1934 and 1938, 600 young adults rated their personality and had their personalities rated by five close acquaintances. Big Five equivalent measures were constructed from both self- and peer-reports. Results indicated that both self-reported and peer-reported personality traits predicted longer lives for males and females. Interestingly, in some cases self- and peer-reports were independent predictors of mortality. For example, peers were able to identify unique aspects of a person's levels of conscientiousness that were, in turn, associated with longer lives. Results suggest that friends have important insights into one's personality.

### **Intergenerational transmission of risk: Parent conscientiousness is a protective factor for childhood weight**

Angelina R. Sutin, Richard W. Robins, Keith F. Widaman, Rand Conger  
*Florida State University College of Medicine; University of California, Davis*

The protective effect of Conscientiousness on health-related outcomes, such as body mass index (BMI), is usually considered within the context of the individual's own Conscientiousness. We tested whether this protective effect on BMI extends from parent to child. Participants were from the California Families Project, a longitudinal study of Mexican-origin youth (N=674) and their parents. Child BMI was assessed annually from ages 12 to 15; participants also completed personality measures. Parents higher in Conscientiousness had children with lower BMI; growth curve analyses indicated that parent Conscientiousness was associated with lower average BMI (intercept) but was unrelated to weight gain (slope). Child's Conscientiousness was associated with both lower BMI and less weight gain. These results suggest that parent Conscientiousness may matter for initial weight when entering adolescence, but the child's Conscientiousness is more important for weight gain across adolescence. Parents psychological functioning has implications for the health of their children.