

Integrative Medicine: Cognitive behavioral therapy

February 4 2011, By Kay Judge and Maxine Barish-Wreden

We know that the state of the mind has a lot to do with how healthy the body is. An interesting study published this month in the Annals of Internal Medicine demonstrates the mind-body connection yet again - this time in relationship to heart disease.

The study looked at 362 men and women 75 and younger who had experienced a cardiac event within the past year.

The patients were separated into two groups. One group received traditional care, and the other received traditional care plus cognitive behavioral therapy. Significant results from the study showed the group that received cognitive behavioral therapy had fewer recurrent [cardiac events](#) - a 45 percent reduction in heart attacks compared to the traditional group.

What is cognitive behavioral therapy and how was it applied to this group of patients?

[Cognitive behavioral therapy](#) is counseling focused on resolving problems concerning dysfunctional emotions, behaviors and cognitions through a goal-oriented, systematic procedure.

In this study, the CBT focused on stress management, with patients attending 20 two-hour sessions during a year. These sessions were structured around five goals to reduce stress: education, self-monitoring, skills training, cognitive restructuring and spiritual development.

Participants were taught how to bring this new method of behavior and coping to reduce stress and hostility in their daily lives.

As a result of this stress reduction through CBT, there was a significant reduction in heart attacks. Furthermore, the more sessions the participants attended, the better the results.

So, one might think, this proves that a reduction of depression leads to fewer cardiovascular events.

Yes and no.

A study done almost 10 years ago showed that patients on antidepressants did no better than those not on [antidepressants](#) after a [heart attack](#).

Perhaps healing is not just correcting a chemical imbalance in the brain, but incorporating positive thoughts and behavior patterns in the healing process. Our bodies are, in the end, a product of what and how we think.

(c) 2011, The Sacramento Bee (Sacramento, Calif.).

Distributed by McClatchy-Tribune Information Services.

Citation: Integrative Medicine: Cognitive behavioral therapy (2011, February 4) retrieved 25 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-02-medicine-cognitive-behavioral-therapy.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--