Chronic Illness

New Study Shows Therapy May Improve Your Immune System

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July 9, 2020

What happened: Autoimmune conditions affect millions of Americans. A new study from the University of California, Los Angeles published in **JAMA Psychiatry** analyzed 56 studies about autoimmune disease and concluded that psychosocial intervention (essentially therapy) was associated with enhanced immune system functioning.

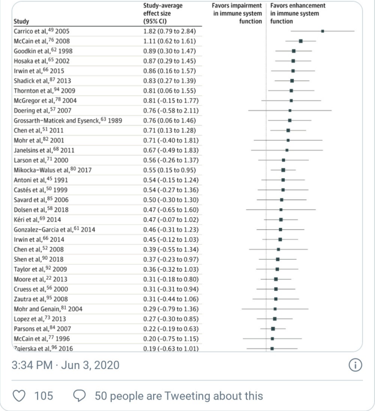
In particular, the study found that cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) created the same amount of immune system improvement as drugs that are typically used to treat inflammatory diseases of the immune system. The study also noted that 10 weeks of CBT costs about $1,500, while one year's worth of a drug for autoimmune inflammation can cost $25,000 per year.

> **Psychosocial interventions are reliably associated with enhanced immune system function and may therefore represent a viable strategy for improving immune-related health.**

UCLA Stress Lab
@UCLAStressLab

Out today: Our new review & meta-analysis of 56 RCTs in JAMA Psychiatry showing that #psychotherapy in general, and especially #CBT, reduces #inflammation & improves #ImmuneSystem function! @ABCTNOW #CBTWorks

Online article: ja.ma/2Y0717Y
PDF: bit.ly/ShieldsJAMAPsy...



Study	Study-average effect size (95% CI)
Carrico et al,[49] 2005	1.82 (0.79 to 2.84)
McCain et al,[76] 2008	1.11 (0.62 to 1.61)
Goodkin et al,[62] 1998	0.89 (0.30 to 1.47)
Hosaka et al,[65] 2002	0.87 (0.29 to 1.45)
Irwin et al,[66] 2015	0.86 (0.16 to 1.57)
Shadick et al,[87] 2013	0.83 (0.27 to 1.39)
Thornton et al,[94] 2009	0.81 (0.06 to 1.55)
McGregor et al,[78] 2004	0.81 (-0.15 to 1.77)
Doering et al,[57] 2007	0.76 (-0.58 to 2.11)
Grossarth-Maticek and Eysenck,[63] 1989	0.76 (0.06 to 1.46)
Chen et al,[51] 2011	0.71 (0.13 to 1.28)
Mohr et al,[82] 2001	0.71 (-0.40 to 1.81)
Janelsins et al,[68] 2011	0.67 (-0.49 to 1.83)
Larson et al,[71] 2000	0.56 (-0.26 to 1.37)
Mikocka-Walus et al,[80] 2017	0.55 (0.15 to 0.95)
Antoni et al,[45] 1991	0.54 (-0.15 to 1.24)
Castés et al,[50] 1999	0.54 (-0.27 to 1.36)
Savard et al,[85] 2006	0.50 (-0.30 to 1.30)
Dolsen et al,[58] 2018	0.47 (-0.65 to 1.60)
Kéri et al,[69] 2014	0.47 (-0.07 to 1.02)
Gonzalez-Garcia et al,[61] 2014	0.46 (-0.31 to 1.23)
Irwin et al,[66] 2014	0.45 (-0.12 to 1.03)
Chen et al,[52] 2008	0.39 (-0.55 to 1.34)
Shen et al,[90] 2018	0.37 (-0.23 to 0.97)
Taylor et al,[92] 2009	0.36 (-0.32 to 1.03)
Moore et al,[22] 2013	0.31 (-0.18 to 0.80)
Cruess et al,[56] 2000	0.31 (-0.31 to 0.94)
Zautra et al,[95] 2008	0.31 (-0.44 to 1.06)
Mohr and Genain,[81] 2004	0.29 (-0.79 to 1.36)
Lopez et al,[73] 2013	0.27 (-0.30 to 0.85)
Parsons et al,[84] 2007	0.22 (-0.19 to 0.63)
McCain et al,[77] 1996	0.20 (-0.75 to 1.15)
Zgierska et al,[96] 2016	0.19 (-0.63 to 1.01)

3:34 PM · Jun 3, 2020

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The Frontlines: The immune system usually works to attack germs and viruses that endanger our health. People with autoimmune diseases have an immune system that mistakenly attacks their own body, destroying organs, joints or skin. Autoimmune diseases are on the rise and are connected with genetic factors, stress, environmental factors and diet.

- There are more than 80 different immune system disorders
- 5 million Americans have at least one autoimmune disease
- Examples of autoimmune disease include lupus, multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis and inflammatory bowel disease (IBD)

Get more on mental health: Sign up for our weekly mental health newsletter.

A Mighty Voice: Our community member, Samantha Reid, who has Crohn's disease, already knows how interconnected her body and mind are. **She shared**, "If you're physically sick, it's exceedingly normal to develop mental illness symptoms as well. You are not alone, and you are not to blame. But just because it's normal doesn't mean you can't treat it and try to create a life with more peaks and fewer valleys." **You can submit your first person story, too**.

Also keep in mind: Often patients with invisible symptoms are told it's "**all in their head**" and referred for mental health treatment instead of further work to diagnosis a chronic illness. It's important to note that while therapy traditionally associated with mental health can help you manage chronic illness symptoms, it's likely only one strategy in a larger treatment plan.

From Our Community:

Take a Mighty Minute
@takeamightyminute

What takes up the most time in your day-to-day life?

Working? Sleeping? Being in pain? Taking care of others? Tell us what you spend the most time and energy on every day. ⏰ P.S. Because we tend to catch only small glimpses of each other's lives (and not the full picture) — we want to acknowledge EVERY facet of your day. #MightyMinute #thursdaythoughts #MentalHealth #ChronicIllness #RareDisease #Disability #Parenting #Cancer #Autism

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Other things to know: Autoimmune disease is a physical condition but it also has a psychological impact. Read more about this connection:

- The Waiting that Comes with Autoimmune Disease
- What the Invisible Struggles of Autoimmunity Really Feel Like
- New Study Associates Stress-Related Disorders With Increased Risk of Autoimmune Disease

Where to learn more: Get information about autoimmune conditions from the **American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association**.

Share Your Experience With a Community That Cares

You can now post Thoughts on The Mighty. Here's how.

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Brette Sember is freelancer, editor, author, ghostwriter, book coach, indexer, and content producer. She lives in western New York state with her husband and two golden retrievers. Her web site is www.BretteSember.com.

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Lee
@leelovethemighty
United States of America • 21 days ago

Listen to YouTube videos on raising dopamine levels my brain dr said and Mozart music is great for the brain and Apples that was his suggestion

Reply ♡

Matthew Weatherford **Community Leader** ✓
@biggmatt
United States of America • 21 days ago

It's been proven a number of times that reducing stress does. I can see where therapy would help to just for that reason

Reply ♡

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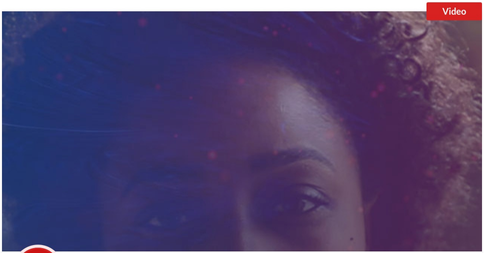

The Mighty Video • Follow
@the-mighty-video
October 16, 2019

Things People May Not Realize We Do Because of Sudden Flare-Ups

You never really know what someone living with chronic illness is going through. Hopefully, with some insights into what a flare-up is really like, we can find more understanding and compassion for

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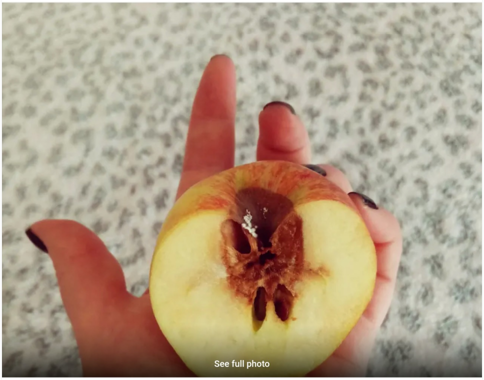

Narcissists

I thought I'd share this pic of a rotten apple with you because an awful lot of us have narcissists in our lives or have had. This is what they are. Tempting on the outside, but POISONOUS on the inside and most of the time most people can't tell unless they take a bite. 🖤

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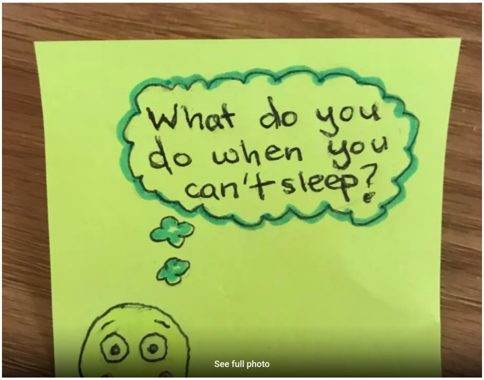
What do you do when you can't sleep?
See full photo

What do you do when you can't sleep?

We understand that sleep and health are often interconnected (spoiler alert: rest is important! 👏). And it can be difficult (and frustrating!) to know what to do when part of

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