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Back & Neck Pain Blog

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Bad Luck May Be Good Omen for a Bad Back

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If you've endured some difficulties in your life before you got a chronic back condition you may be in luck as far as your prognosis goes. The key here is some - as in falling between no life adversity and a lot of it. A new study, to be published in the September issue of *Pain* surveyed 396 adult chronic back pain sufferers. They found that people who have met with some life challenge prior to a back problem reported better function and less use of the health care system for their back pain than the others.

So what constitutes some adversity? Study participants said they had dealt with illness, violence, death of a loved one or friend, relationship and social stress or disaster.



I'm convinced that the link is psychological and/or social. It seems the researchers for this study agree. Dr. Mark Seery, investigator and assistant professor of psychology at University of Buffalo says, "the data suggest that adversity-exposure also may protect against psychiatric disturbances that occur with CBP."

The researchers explain the link in terms of resilience. They suggest those who previously dealt with some life difficulties had developed a useful degree of it. Seery says that adversity may have caused the back pain sufferers to develop psychological and social resources. He suggests these new personal capacities may have been responsible for a higher degree of improvement from treatment (or for some, by just waiting it out). Seery also suggests these people may have reassessed the severity of their symptoms, relegating some or all to the status of minor annoyance they can live with.

Other research studies support the theory that your attitude, social and family roles all play into the severity of a chronic back condition. Even so, "resilience is largely ignored in previous chronic back pain research," Seery comments.

Resilience. Hmmm. Maybe they're on to something here. What do you think? Leave your comment below.

Source:

Press Release. A Little Adversity Bodes Well for Those with Chronic Back Pain. Aug. 5, 2010.

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