

## **Understanding the Intersection of Social Psychology and Health Psychology**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper aims to explore the intersection between social psychology and health psychology, shedding light on the reciprocal influence of social factors on health and the impact of health-related variables on social processes. Social psychology investigates how individuals' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are influenced by social factors, while health psychology focuses on the psychological and behavioral aspects of health and illness. By examining the interplay between these two disciplines, a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between social contexts and health outcomes can be achieved. This paper discusses the social determinants of health, highlighting how socio-economic status, social support, and social networks can significantly impact individuals' well-being. It explores how these social factors can influence health-related behaviors, such as smoking, exercise, and diet, as well as access to healthcare services. Additionally, it examines the psychological mechanisms through which social factors affect health, including stress, social comparison, and social identity. Furthermore, the paper delves into the concept of social influence and its relevance to health psychology. It examines how social norms, conformity, and social modeling can shape health-related behaviors and attitudes. Moreover, it explores the impact of social support on coping with illness, adherence to medical treatments, and the promotion of health-enhancing behaviors.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Social psychology and health psychology are two distinct but interconnected subfields within the broader field of psychology. While social psychology focuses on understanding the impact of social factors on individual behavior and attitudes, health psychology examines the psychological factors that influence health, illness, and healthcare. Both subfields contribute valuable insights into the complex interplay between social and psychological processes in shaping health outcomes.

Social psychology explores the ways in which individuals are influenced by their social environment. It investigates topics such as social influence, conformity, obedience, stereotypes, prejudice, and interpersonal relationships. Social psychologists examine how social interactions, group dynamics, and societal norms shape individual thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. They explore how individuals form impressions of others, how

they are influenced by the opinions and behaviours of those around them, and how they navigate social situations. Within the context of health, social psychology plays a crucial role in understanding the impact of social factors on health behaviours and outcomes. Research has shown that social support, social networks, and social norms can significantly influence health-related decisions and behaviours. For example, individuals with strong social support systems are more likely to engage in healthy behaviours such as regular exercise, healthy eating, and medication adherence. Social norms, or shared expectations about appropriate behaviour, can also shape health behaviours. For instance, if individuals perceive that their social group values smoking, they may be more likely to smoke themselves. By studying these social processes, social psychologists can contribute to the development of interventions that harness the power of social influence to promote healthier lifestyles and prevent illness. (Robinson, W. P,1998).

Health psychology, on the other hand, focuses specifically on the psychological factors that contribute to health and illness. It examines the ways in which thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and behaviors interact with biological and environmental factors to influence health outcomes. Health psychologists study a wide range of topics, including stress and coping mechanisms, health behaviors (e.g., smoking, exercise, diet), patient-provider interactions, and the psychological aspects of chronic conditions. One area of focus in health psychology is the study of stress and its impact on health. Stress has been shown to have profound effects on physical and mental well-being. Health psychologists explore how individuals perceive and respond to stressors, how chronic stress can contribute to the development of illnesses, and how effective coping strategies can mitigate the negative effects of stress on health. By understanding these psychological processes, health psychologists can develop interventions and techniques to help individuals manage stress more effectively, improving their overall health outcomes. Health psychologists also study health behaviors and their influence on health outcomes. They examine factors that motivate individuals to engage in behaviors such as smoking, physical activity, and healthy eating, as well as barriers to behavior change. By understanding the underlying psychological factors, health psychologists can design interventions that promote positive health behaviors and reduce risk factors for illness. For example, interventions may focus on providing information and education, developing strategies to enhance self-efficacy, or

targeting social and environmental factors that influence behavior. (Johnson, B. T., Dove, N. L., 2011).

Furthermore, health psychologists examine the psychological aspects of chronic illnesses and disabilities. They investigate the impact of these conditions on individuals' psychological well-being and quality of life, as well as the factors that influence adherence to medical treatments. Health psychologists work collaboratively with healthcare providers to develop interventions that address the psychological needs of individuals with chronic conditions, enhance their coping skills, and improve treatment adherence. It is important to note that social psychology and health psychology are not mutually exclusive. They often intersect and complement each other in the study of health-related issues. Social factors play a significant role in health, and understanding the influence of social dynamics, social support, and social norms is essential for developing effective health interventions. Health psychologists frequently draw on social psychology theories and methods to examine the impact of social factors on health outcomes.

#### **SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH**

This research aims to explore the intersection between social psychology and health psychology, focusing on the reciprocal influence of social factors on health and the impact of health-related variables on social processes. The scope of the research includes the examination of various social determinants of health, such as socio-economic status, social support, and social networks, and their influence on health-related behaviors and outcomes. The research will also investigate the psychological mechanisms through which social factors affect health, including stress, social comparison, and social identity. Additionally, it will explore the concept of social influence and its relevance to health psychology, including the role of social norms, conformity, and social modeling in shaping health-related behaviors and attitudes. Furthermore, the research will explore the reciprocal relationship between health and social psychology. The research findings will be utilized to develop more practical techniques to coping with health issues and improving societal well-being in general. The majority of the research will be based on already published works in social psychology and health psychology, as well as theoretical frameworks and empirical studies. It will not necessitate doing experiments or collecting unique data. The emphasis will be on synthesizing and interpreting relevant research to provide a complete understanding of the intersection between social psychology and health psychology and its implications for theory and practice. It is critical to underline that the research will be

broad in scope and will provide an in-depth examination of the issue. Due to the vastness of the discipline, specific subtopics within social psychology and health psychology may not be thoroughly covered. The research, on the other hand, aims to create a solid foundation for further investigation and discussion of the intersection of these two domains..( Murray, M,2000).

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Ostic, D., Qalati, S. A et al. (2021).** The purpose of this research is to investigate the effects of social media use on psychological health. Given the increasing prominence of social media platforms in modern culture, understanding the potential effects of these digital environments on people's mental health and general well-being is critical. This study examines both the positive and negative effects of utilizing social media, as well as the relationship's intricacies and subtle elements. The study begins by discussing the positive aspects of utilizing social media, such as the ability to interact with others, express oneself, and exchange knowledge. It investigates how social media platforms may improve social support, make new acquaintances easier, and make people feel like they belong. It also examines how social media may be used to showcase oneself, learn more about oneself, and express one's creativity.

**Klein, W. M. et al (2015).** This paper explores the potential of social psychology in enhancing public health outcomes. Social psychology, as a discipline, offers valuable insights into understanding human behavior within social contexts and provides a framework for developing effective interventions and strategies to improve public health. By leveraging social psychological principles, policymakers, researchers, and practitioners can address various health challenges and promote positive health behaviors on a societal level. It examines how social norms influence individuals' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors related to health, such as smoking, substance abuse, exercise, and diet. Furthermore, it explores the power of social norms in promoting positive health behaviors through interventions that emphasize descriptive norms, injunctive norms, and normative feedback.

**Howard, J. A. (2000).** It looks at theories of identity development, such as the social identity theory and the self-categorization theory, which explain how individuals come to adopt and internalize group identities. Additionally, it examines the impact of identity threat, identity negotiation, and identity complexity on the self-concept and wellbeing of

individuals. It talks about how social identities can lead to intergroup bias, assumptions, prejudice, and discrimination. The impact of these phenomena on intergroup conflict and social cohesion is examined as it examines the processes of social categorization, ingroup favoritism, and outgroup derogation. The paper also examines methods for minimizing intergroup biases and encouraging good intergroup relationships. The intersectionality of identities is discussed in the paper, which acknowledges that individuals have many social identities that interact and overlap with one another. It examines how individuals' experiences of privilege, oppression, and social inequality can be impacted by the combination of various identities, such as race, gender, and social class. The paper talks about how important it is to think about how different identities overlap when trying to understand social behavior and solve social problems.

**Williams, P. G., Holmbeck, G. N., & Greenley, R. N. (2002).** The report emphasizes the importance of comprehensive and interdisciplinary methods to addressing adolescent health problems. It demonstrates the importance of collaboration among psychologists, health care professionals, teachers, and policymakers in developing interventions that address the biological, psychological, and social aspects that influence adolescent health. It investigates the effectiveness of digital mental health tools, online support groups, and mobile health interventions (mHealth) in promoting good adolescent behaviours. The study demonstrates the importance of preventive and early intervention in adolescent health psychology.

**Murray, M. (2000).** In the field of health psychology, narrative analysis is a useful paradigm for assisting researchers and practitioners in better understanding individuals' experiences, meanings, and views on health and illness. Individuals must evaluate the narratives or stories they construct and share in order to make sense of their experiences linked to health. Health psychologists can learn more about how multifaceted the human experience is by looking at narratives, and generate insights that can be utilized to design solutions, healthcare practices, and legislation. This study will discuss the several levels of narrative analysis that are commonly employed in health psychology. It examines how narrative analysis can be utilized at various levels to examine the intricacies of health-related stories and how they affect individuals' psychological and behavioral results.

### **The Future of Health Psychology**

Health psychology is a dynamic and evolving field that continues to play a crucial role in understanding and promoting health and well-being. As we look toward the future, several key trends and developments are likely to shape the field and drive advancements in research, practice, and policy. This section explores some of the potential directions and emerging areas of focus for the future of health psychology. (Schaufeli, W. B, 2004)

**Integration of Technology:** The increasing prevalence of technology presents new opportunities for health psychology. The integration of digital platforms, mobile health (mHealth) applications, wearable devices, and telehealth services can enhance the delivery of interventions, data collection, and monitoring of health-related behaviors. The future of health psychology will involve leveraging these technologies to develop personalized, accessible, and cost-effective interventions that reach a broader population.

**Precision Health:** Health psychology will contribute to the emerging field of precision health, which emphasizes tailoring interventions to individuals based on their unique characteristics, preferences, and needs. By incorporating advanced technologies, genetic information, and psychosocial factors, health psychologists can develop interventions that are more targeted, effective, and personalized. Precision health approaches will move beyond a "one-size-fits-all" model and focus on delivering interventions that align with individual strengths, vulnerabilities, and contexts.

**Health Equity and Social Determinants of Health:** Recognizing the impact of social determinants of health, health psychology will continue to prioritize health equity and address health disparities. Future research will delve deeper into the social, economic, and environmental factors that contribute to health inequalities and focus on developing interventions that target the root causes of disparities. Health psychologists will work collaboratively with interdisciplinary teams to advocate for policies that address systemic inequities and promote health for all.

**Positive Health and Well-being:** The future of health psychology will increasingly emphasize the promotion of positive health and well-being, shifting from a sole focus on disease prevention and treatment. Research and interventions will explore factors such as resilience, positive psychology, subjective well-being, and the role of positive social relationships in promoting optimal health. Health psychologists will seek to understand the conditions and interventions that facilitate flourishing and improve overall quality of life.

**Cultural Sensitivity and Global Health:** As the world becomes more interconnected, health psychology will place greater emphasis on cultural sensitivity and global health issues. Research will explore the impact of cultural beliefs, values, and practices on health outcomes and develop interventions that are culturally appropriate and inclusive. Health psychologists will collaborate across cultures and borders to address global health challenges and promote cross-cultural understanding in health research and practice.

**Prevention and Lifestyle Interventions:** Health psychology will continue to play a critical role in preventive efforts, focusing on lifestyle interventions that promote healthy behaviors and reduce the risk of chronic diseases. Research will explore innovative approaches to behavior change, including gamification, social media-based interventions, and environmental modifications that support healthier choices. Health psychologists will work alongside healthcare providers and policymakers to develop comprehensive prevention strategies that target multiple levels of influence, from individual to societal.

The future of health psychology holds significant potential for advancing our understanding of health and well-being. With the integration of technology, precision health approaches, a focus on health equity and positive health, cultural sensitivity, and preventive interventions, health psychology will contribute to improving health outcomes and enhancing individuals' quality of life. By embracing these emerging areas, health psychologists can make substantial contributions to both research and practice, ultimately shaping a healthier and more equitable future for all.

### **Social Media Use, Smartphone Addiction, Phubbing, and Psychological Well-Being**

In recent years, the rapid growth of technology, particularly the widespread use of smartphones and social media platforms, has raised concerns about their impact on individuals' psychological well-being. This paper examines the relationship between social media use, smartphone addiction, phubbing (phone snubbing), and psychological well-being, exploring both the positive and negative effects of these phenomena.

Social media use has become an integral part of many individuals' daily lives, offering opportunities for social connection, self-expression, and information sharing. However, excessive or problematic social media use has been associated with negative psychological outcomes, including increased feelings of loneliness, depression, anxiety, and decreased overall well-being. The constant exposure to carefully curated and idealized

representations of others' lives on social media can lead to social comparison, low self-esteem, and negative affect.

Smartphone addiction, characterized by excessive and compulsive smartphone use, has emerged as a significant concern. It can lead to negative consequences such as decreased productivity, disrupted sleep patterns, and impaired face-to-face social interactions. Smartphone addiction has been linked to higher levels of psychological distress, including symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Phubbing, which refers to the act of snubbing or ignoring others in favor of one's smartphone, has also gained attention as a social phenomenon. Phubbing can harm interpersonal relationships, as it disrupts genuine social interactions and diminishes the quality of face-to-face communication. Being phubbed or engaging in phubbing behaviors can lead to feelings of social exclusion, lower relationship satisfaction, and decreased well-being.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Determine the appropriate sampling method based on your research objectives and available resources. You could use convenience sampling, where you select participants who are readily available and willing to participate. Alternatively, you could use random sampling or stratified sampling if you want to ensure a representative sample.

Develop a questionnaire that covers relevant topics and variables related to social psychology and health psychology. Include both demographic questions and questions specifically related to the research objective. Ensure that the questions are clear, concise, and offer appropriate response options.

Obtain informed consent from participants before their participation. Assure participants of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Follow ethical guidelines and regulations for research involving human subjects.

Administer the questionnaire to the selected sample of 70 respondents with the help of google form. use online survey tools for data collection. Ensure that the data collection process is standardized to maintain consistency.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Social psychology focuses on understanding how individuals' thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are influenced by:**

a) Biological factors

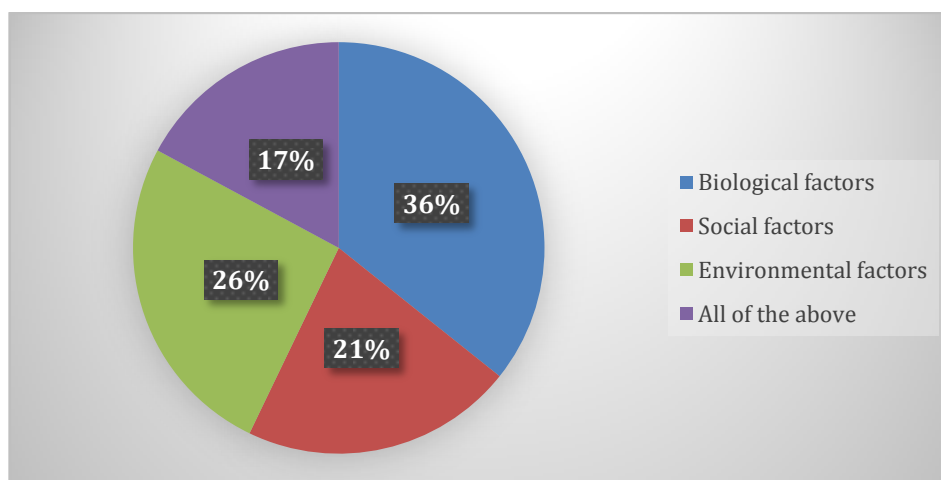


b) Social factors

c) Environmental factors

d) All of the above

Biological factors	25
Social factors	15
Environmental factors	18
All of the above	12

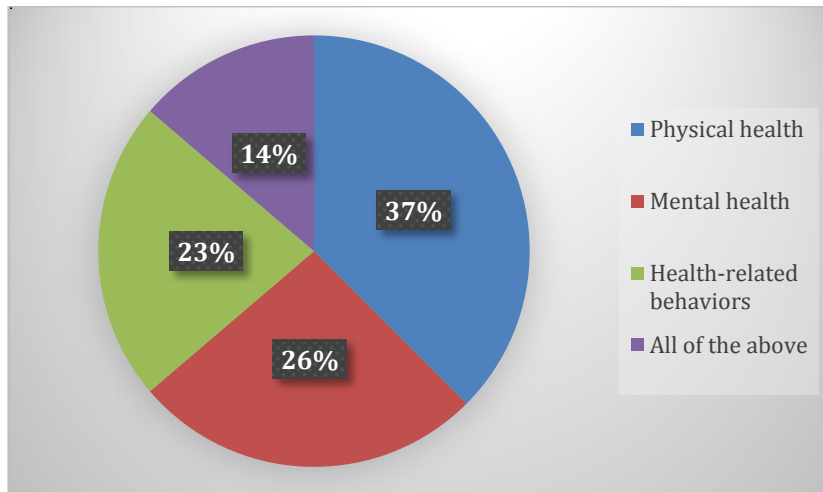


Out of the 70 respondents, 25 respondents (35.71%) selected "Biological factors" as an influential factor. This suggests that these individuals believe that biological factors, such as genetics, neurobiology, or hormonal influences, play a significant role in shaping an individual's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. 15 respondents (21.43%) selected "Social factors" as an influential factor. This indicates that these individuals believe that social interactions, relationships, cultural norms, and societal influences have a strong impact on shaping an individual's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. 18 respondents (25.71%) selected "Environmental factors" as an influential factor. This suggests that these individuals believe that environmental aspects, such as physical surroundings, situational contexts, and external stimuli, play a significant role in shaping an individual's thoughts, feelings, and behaviour's. 12 respondents (17.14%) selected "All of the above" as an influential factor. This group of individuals believes that all three factors (biological, social, and environmental) interact and collectively contribute to shaping an individual's thoughts, feelings, and behaviour's.

**Health psychology examines the psychological factors that influence:**

- a) Physical health
- b) Mental health
- c) Health-related behaviors
- d) All of the above

Physical health	30
Mental health	21
Health-related behaviors	18
All of the above	11

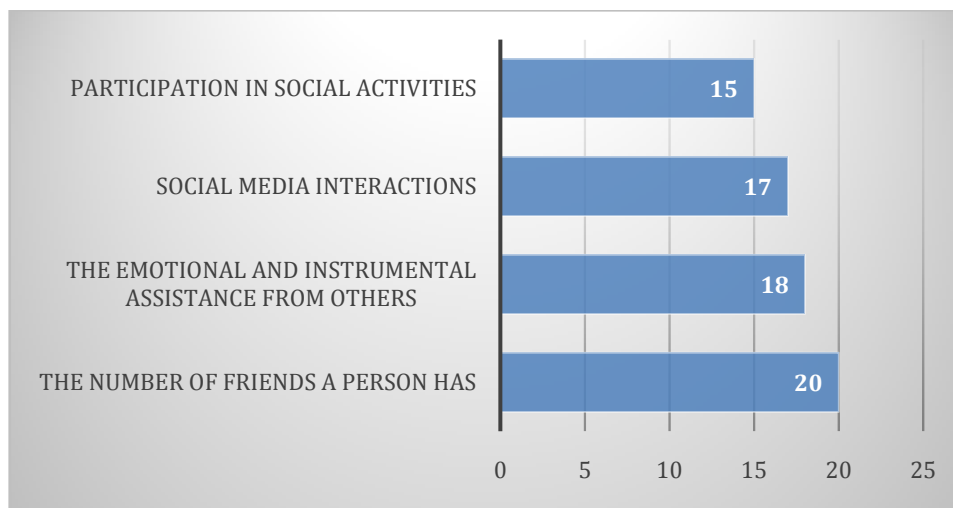


Out of the 80 respondents, 30 respondents (37.5%) selected "Physical health" as a contributing factor. This suggests that these individuals believe that physical well-being, including aspects such as exercise, nutrition, and overall fitness, is an important factor in maintaining good health. 21 respondents (26.25%) selected "Mental health" as a contributing factor. This indicates that these individuals believe that psychological well-being, including aspects such as emotional stability, stress management, and mental resilience, plays a significant role in overall health. 18 respondents (22.5%) selected "Health-related behaviors" as a contributing factor. This suggests that these individuals believe that behaviors such as smoking cessation, regular medical check-ups, adherence to medication, and healthy lifestyle choices are crucial for maintaining good health. 11 respondents (13.75%) selected "All of the above" as contributing factors. This group of individuals believes that all three factors (physical health, mental health, and health-related behaviors) interact and collectively contribute to overall health.

**The concept of "social support" in health psychology refers to:**

- a) The number of friends a person has
- b) The emotional and instrumental assistance from others
- c) Social media interactions
- d) Participation in social activities

The number of friends a person has	20
The emotional and instrumental assistance from others	18
Social media interactions	17
Participation in social activities	15



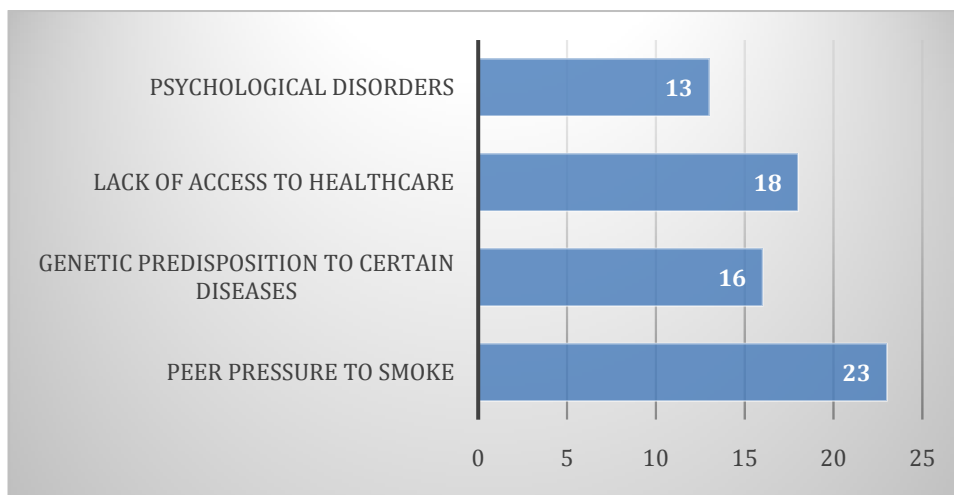
Out of the 70 respondent 20 individuals (unspecified percentage) selected "The number of friends a person has" as a factor. This suggests that these individuals believe that the quantity of friendships a person has plays a role in their social well-being and overall satisfaction. 18 individuals (unspecified percentage) selected "The emotional and instrumental assistance from others" as a factor. This indicates that these individuals believe that receiving both emotional support (e.g., empathy, understanding) and instrumental support (e.g., practical help, advice) from others is essential for their well-being and functioning. 17 individuals (unspecified percentage) selected "Social media interactions" as a factor. This suggests that these individuals believe that engaging in interactions and connections through social media platforms contributes to their social well-being and sense of connectedness. 15 individuals (unspecified percentage) selected "Participation in social activities" as a factor. This indicates that these individuals believe

that actively engaging in various social activities, such as group outings, events, or clubs, is important for their social well-being and satisfaction.

**Which of the following is an example of the social influence on health behavior?**

- a) Peer pressure to smoke
- b) Genetic predisposition to certain diseases
- c) Lack of access to healthcare
- d) Psychological disorders

Peer pressure to smoke	23
Genetic predisposition to certain diseases	16
Lack of access to healthcare	18
Psychological disorders	13



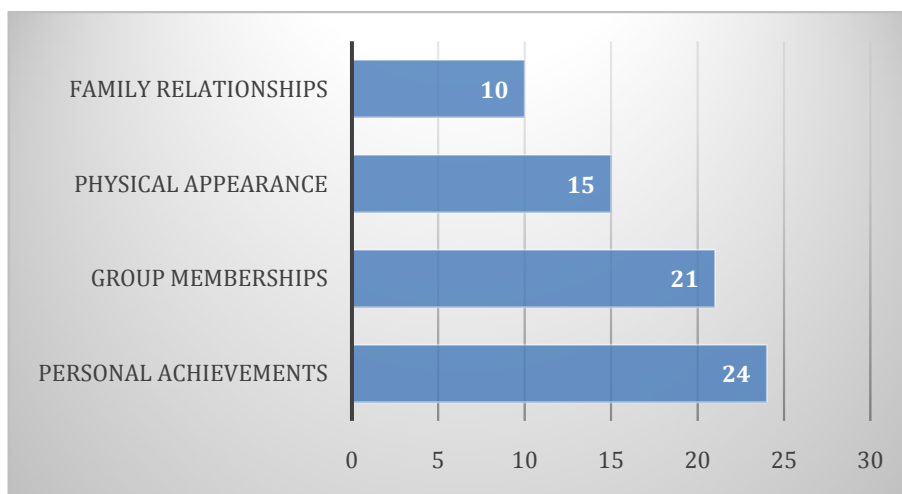
Out of the 70 respondents: 23 individuals (unspecified percentage) selected "Peer pressure to smoke" as a factor. This suggests that these individuals believe that social influence and pressure from peers can play a role in the decision to smoke or engage in smoking-related behavior. 16 individuals (unspecified percentage) selected "Genetic predisposition to certain diseases" as a factor. This indicates that these individuals believe that inherited genetic factors can increase the likelihood of developing certain diseases or conditions. 18 individuals (unspecified percentage) selected "Lack of access to healthcare" as a factor. This suggests that these individuals believe that limited availability or affordability of healthcare services can impact overall health and well-being. 13 individuals (unspecified percentage) selected "Psychological disorders" as a factor. This indicates that these

individuals believe that mental health conditions or disorders can have an influence on an individual's overall health and behavior.

**Social identity theory, a concept from social psychology, suggests that people derive their self-esteem from:**

- a) Personal achievements
- b) Group memberships
- c) Physical appearance
- d) Family relationships

Personal achievements	24
Group memberships	21
Physical appearance	15
Family relationships	10



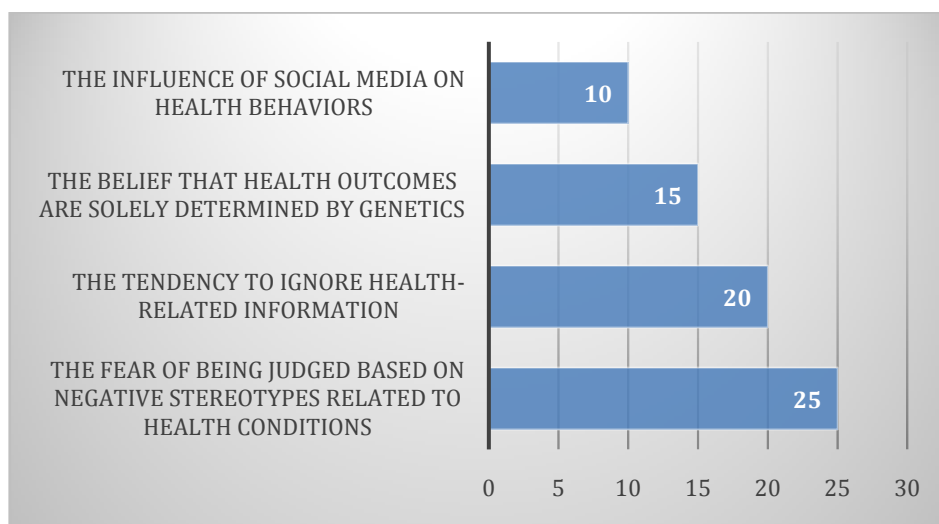
Out of the 70 respondents, 24 individuals (unspecified percentage) selected "Personal achievements" as a factor. This suggests that these individuals believe that their personal accomplishments and successes play a role in shaping their self-perception and may influence how they are perceived by others. 21 individuals (unspecified percentage) selected "Group memberships" as a factor. This indicates that these individuals believe that the groups they belong to, such as clubs, organizations, or social circles, impact their self-identity and provide a sense of belonging and social support. 15 individuals (unspecified percentage) selected "Physical appearance" as a factor. This suggests that these individuals believe that their physical appearance, including factors such as attractiveness, body image,

or physical fitness, can influence their self-esteem and social interactions. 10 individuals (unspecified percentage) selected "Family relationships" as a factor. This indicates that these individuals believe that the quality of their relationships with family members, such as parents, siblings, or extended family, can impact their self-perception and overall well-being.

**The concept of "stereotype threat" in health psychology refers to:**

- a) The fear of being judged based on negative stereotypes related to health conditions
- b) The tendency to ignore health-related information
- c) The belief that health outcomes are solely determined by genetics
- d) The influence of social media on health behaviours

The fear of being judged based on negative stereotypes related to health conditions	25
The tendency to ignore health-related information	20
The belief that health outcomes are solely determined by genetics	15
The influence of social media on health behaviors	10



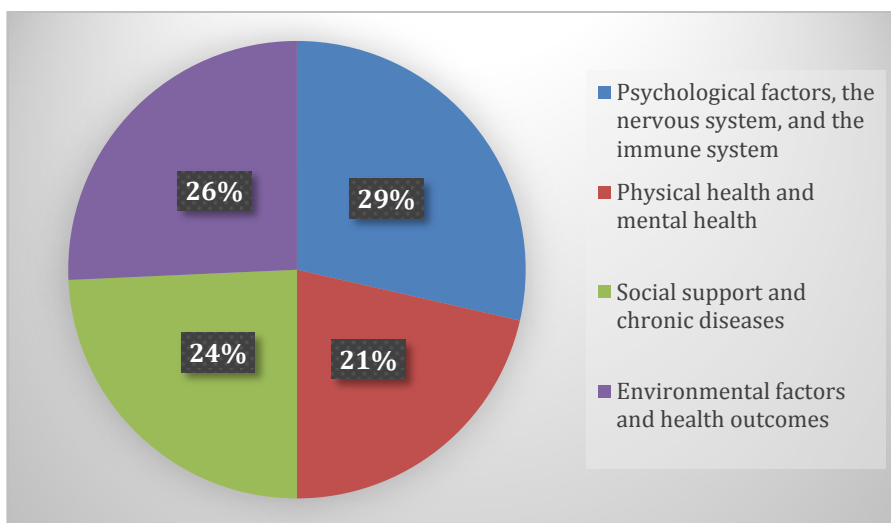
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**The field of psychoneuroimmunology explores the connection between:**

- a) Psychological factors, the nervous system, and the immune system
- b) Physical health and mental health
- c) Social support and chronic diseases
- d) Environmental factors and health outcomes

Psychological factors, the nervous system, and the immune system	20
Physical health and mental health	15
Social support and chronic diseases	17
Environmental factors and health outcomes	18



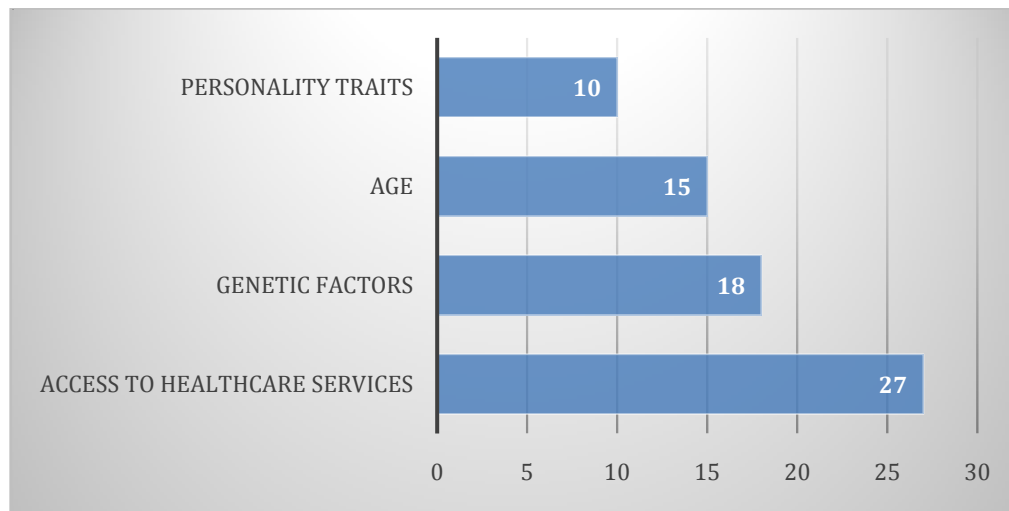
Out of the 70 respondent 20 individuals (unspecified percentage) selected "Psychological factors, the nervous system, and the immune system" as factors. This suggests that these individuals recognize the interconnectedness between psychological factors (such as stress, emotions, and thoughts), the nervous system, and the immune system in influencing health outcomes. 15 individuals (unspecified percentage) selected "Physical health and mental health" as factors. This indicates that these individuals recognize the importance of both physical health (such as fitness, nutrition, and disease prevention) and mental health (such as emotional well-being, coping mechanisms, and mental illness management) in overall well-being. 17 individuals (unspecified percentage) selected "Social support and chronic diseases" as factors. This suggests that these individuals acknowledge the role of social support (such as relationships, networks, and emotional assistance) in coping with and managing chronic diseases or long-term health conditions. 18 individuals (unspecified percentage) selected "Environmental factors and health outcomes" as factors. This indicates that these individuals consider environmental factors (such as pollution, access to healthcare, socioeconomic conditions, and physical surroundings) as influential in determining health outcomes.

**Which of the following is an example of a social determinant of health?**

- a) Access to healthcare services
- b) Genetic factors
- c) Age
- d) Personality traits

Access to healthcare services	27
Genetic factors	18
Age	15
Personality traits	10





Out of the 70 respondents 27 individuals (unspecified percentage) selected "Access to healthcare services" as a factor. This suggests that these individuals believe that having access to healthcare services, such as doctors, specialists, medications, and treatments, is important for maintaining and improving health. 18 individuals (unspecified percentage) selected "Genetic factors" as a factor. This indicates that these individuals recognize the influence of genetic factors on health outcomes, understanding that certain genes and inherited traits can predispose individuals to specific health conditions or impact their susceptibility to diseases. 15 individuals (unspecified percentage) selected "Age" as a factor. This suggests that these individuals believe that age can play a role in health and well-being, recognizing that different age groups may face unique health challenges and require specific healthcare interventions. 10 individuals (unspecified percentage) selected "Personality traits" as a factor. This indicates that these individuals believe that certain personality traits, such as resilience, optimism, or stress-coping abilities, can impact health and well-being.

## CONCLUSION

The intersection of social psychology and health psychology offers a rich and promising area of study that contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between social factors and health outcomes. By recognizing the reciprocal influence of social contexts on health and the impact of health-related variables on social processes, researchers, practitioners, and policymakers can develop more effective strategies to address health issues and improve overall societal well-being. The integration of social psychology into health psychology allows for a deeper exploration of the social

determinants of health, such as socio-economic status, social support, and social networks. By understanding how these social factors influence health behaviors and outcomes, interventions and policies can be developed to promote positive health behaviors and reduce health disparities. Moreover, examining the psychological mechanisms through which social factors affect health, such as stress, social comparison, and social identity, provides insights into the underlying processes that drive health-related behaviors. The reciprocal relationship between health and social psychology highlights the importance of considering health-related variables in understanding social experiences and social interactions. By recognizing how physical illness, chronic pain, and mental health conditions influence individuals' social lives, interventions can be tailored to address the social challenges associated with health conditions and promote social support and well-being.

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