



## The conceptual framework of The InterHealth Mobile Training Application

### University of West Attica team:

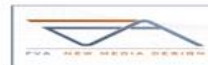
Georgia Fouka, RN, MSc, PhD, Associate professor

Marianna Mantzorou, RN, MSc, PhD, Lecturer

Theodoula Adamakidou, RN, MSc, MHSA, PhD, Lecturer

Sotirios Plakas, RN, MSc, PhD, Assistant professor

Maria Polikandioti, RN, MSc, PhD, Assistant professor



# Keep in mind:

Culturally diverse groups experience a burden of unmet health needs attributed to their beliefs and attitudes.

Culture context explains the inherited, unquestioned and structured way individuals understand and respond to illness.

There are three main cultures regarding illness beliefs that health professionals should be aware since they shape health attitudes.

The awareness of the existence of these beliefs, the understanding of how they impact the different phases of healthcare will help the healthcare professional to acquire an empathic and open attitude significantly contributes to increase the effectiveness of the intervention and the patient's recovery.

**“...illness is linked to transgressions of a moral and spiritual nature.** The general belief is that the sick person either deserves a punishment or is a victim of evil spirits for reasons referred only to him such as contradiction to accepted customary practices, etc. For example, the fall from a tree is viewed as the result of a supernatural agent acting against the individual. This culture is found mostly in America, Africa (south of the Sahara desert), Oceania, and in tribal peoples of Asia.

**Personalistic culture**

**...illness is caused by energy imbalance with natural environment (equilibrium model)** mainly due to excess heat or excess cold, etc. For example, in many Latin American communities, the person doesn't stand on a cold floor in bare feet, doesn't wash hands after whitewashing a wall! Belief in naturalistic causes of illness is found among people of South India and China.

**Illness beliefs**

**...is the basis of the Western medicine** demonstrates that tumors, abnormal cells and chemicals are the causes of illness. According to this model, specific diseases have specific causes.

**Germ theory or biomedical model**

**Naturalistic culture**

# Examples

- Illness beliefs and perceptions about health differ from one culture to another.
- For example, in Western countries, the biomedical model is recognizing obesity as a determinant to adverse health outcomes whereas in Nigeria, women are fattened to improve fertility.
- In other cultures, obesity reflects wealth and good living.
- Consequently, the term "variability" is preferred to the term "normal" that is widely used in biomedical model.

(Ibeneme et al., 2017)

# The conventional stress-vulnerability model.



FIG. 1. Conventional stress-vulnerability model.

- Coping mechanisms to stress are linked to and could increase the risk of illness.
- Several distinct cognitive-behavioral and psychophysiological processes are relevant to different types of influence on health (acute and chronic effects, causal and facilitatory processes, impact on etiology, maintenance, relapse or recurrence).

Step toe, A. The links between stress and illness. *Journal of psychosomatic research.*, 1991;13(6): 633-644)

# Conclusions

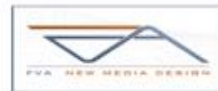
The three models/cultures which explain the illness beliefs are not always very straightforward. Most of the times there is a combination of different beliefs on the same person. A person could also believe in evil's eye, in the balance of energy and germs, too.

There is a need for thorough understanding of patient's health care beliefs.

There is a need for health professionals who are aware of illness beliefs.

# Thank You!

Ευχαριστούμε  
Merci  
Grazie  
Danke  
Gracias



# Βιβλιογραφία

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