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The Role of Social Support in Mediating Stress and Illness

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Poster Presentation 36

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT IN MEDIATING STRESS AND
ILLNESS

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Social support has shown to be one important factor in the link between stress and illness. In this study, the role of social support is examined in light of the two current hypotheses in the field: the main effect hypothesis which states that strong social support will correlate with both low stress and low illness levels, and the buffering hypothesis which states that strong social support will correlate only with low illness levels. The nature of the social support group is investigated by looking at the strength and proximity of the group. We expect that strong social support will be correlated with lower illness levels. We also expect that a physically closer social support group will be correlated with lower illness levels. Finally, we hypothesize that the strength of the social support group will correlate more with lowered illness levels than with the proximity of the social support group.