

Laugh Yourself into a Healthier Person: A Cross Cultural Analysis of the Effects of Varying Levels of Laughter on Health

Hunaid Hasan, Tasneem Fatema Hasan

Abstract :

This cross-cultural study explored along with various personality factors the relationship between laughter and disease prevalence. Previous studies have only determined the effect of laughter on various health dimensions, whereas, this study quantified the level of laughter that was beneficial or detrimental to health. There were a total of 730 participants between the ages of eighteen and thirty-nine years. 366 participants were from Aurangabad, India (AUR), and 364 participants were from Mississauga, Canada (MISS). The participants were provided a survey assessing demographics, laughter, lifestyle, subjective well-being, life satisfaction, emotional well-being and health dimensions. In AUR, a beneficial effect of laughter was mediated through moderate levels (level two) of laughter, whereas both low (level one) and high (level three) levels had no effect. Similarly, in MISS, the beneficial effect was mediated through level two, but a negative effect was also seen at level three. This could be attributable to a higher prevalence of bronchial asthma in western countries. Laughter was associated with emotional well-being in MISS and life satisfaction in AUR, providing cross cultural models to describe the interactions between laughter and disease. This study validated the correlation between emotional well-being and life satisfaction, with a stronger correlation seen in MISS, suggesting that individualists rely more on their emotional well-being to judge their life satisfaction. In conclusion, there is a benefit to clinicians to incorporate laughter history into their general medical history taking. Future research should consider developing mechanisms to explain the effects of level two, determine specific systemic effects and obtain more samples to generalize the cross cultural differences.

Key Word :

Levels of laughter, History-taking, Disease, Life satisfaction, Emotional well-being

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