

Psychological Risk Factors for Cancer?

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The talk will present a theoretical and methodological approach to defining the nature and role of psychological factors as risk factors for cancer diseases. The approach assumes that psychological risk factors are one kind of risk factors functioning in the presence of other kinds of risk factors affecting the chances for the occurrence and course of disease in the presence of a pathogen which is of a physical nature. A psychological methodology based on the cognitive orientation theory will be described for identifying relevant psychological risk factors for diseases and validating them. These factors are beliefs of four kinds (about oneself, about others and reality, about rules and norms, and about goals and wishes) referring to particular individually-shaped meanings. Two studies will be presented, one describing the cognitive orientation cluster characteristic of breast cancer, the other describing the impact of a cognitive orientation cluster on the duration of disease-free interval in three cancer diagnoses.

Biography:

Shulamith Kreitler is a full professor of psychology at Tel Aviv University since 1986, and has worked at Princeton, Harvard and Yale Universities. She is a certified clinical psychologist and health psychologist. She has established (in 1993) the unit of psychooncology at the Tel Aviv Medical Center and (in 2007) the Center for Psychooncology Research at the Sheba Medical Center, Tel-Hashomer and functions as its director. Her major publications are in cognition, personality, and psychooncology. She has developed a new approach to meaning, and for predicting and changing psychological risk factors for chronic diseases