

## Presentation

As guest Editors of *Actualidades en Psicología*, we are pleased to present a selection of scholarly articles focusing on various areas of Health Psychology. The purpose of this special issue is to present some relevant topics for Health Psychology in the region. We have sought, within the call for papers process, to receive manuscripts from Latin America and other regions of the world, with diverse topics and methodological approaches. Six of the ten manuscripts come from research based in Latin America, with the remaining four from European-based scholars.

This special issue includes contributions from scholars focusing on the health and psychology dyad that addresses a myriad of topics from obesity to that of aging, intervention studies, and emotional intelligence. Craciun presents a qualitative study analyzing the intersection of gender and age on the perceptions of general practitioners in Romania. Perez Fuentes et al., underscores the benefits of an intervention program focusing on cognitive stimulation and emotional intelligence among elderly adults in Almeria, Spain. A manuscript further, by Caycho, Castilla Cabello, Ventura León, presents findings on differences in happiness based on sex and age among Peruvian students.

Then, there is a shift in topics, with some focus on illness. Veytia-López, Guadarrama Guadarrama, Márquez-Mendoza & Fajardo Gómez, address mindfulness and depressive symptoms among Mexican adolescents in a correlational study. The issue continues with a report on the contributions of neuropsychology among patients with brain tumors in Costa Rica, presented by Salazar Villanea and collaborators. Borges, García del Castillo, Marzo, García del Castillo-Lopez present a transversal study on the relationship between social support, self-regulation, and drug consumption in Portugal. Nakao, Gorayeb, and Cardenal da Costa provide interesting findings on treatment adherence in hemodialysis patients in Brazil. Gómez-de-Regil contribute with a literature review, on evidence of cognitive behavioral therapy among patients diagnosed with fibromyalgia. Ewert and collaborators demonstrate the effects of a knowledge-based behavioral intervention among pre-diabetic and obese Chilean patients. The issue closes

with a position paper by Schwarzer, which describes the Health Action Process Approach, and presents some of its evidence across diverse countries through.

The topics addressed in these manuscripts are important and diverse. For example, it has been found that mindfulness can be salutogenic in different ways (Keng, Smoski, & Robins 2011; Black, & Slavich, 2016), and the study by Veytia and collaborators, in this number, adds to the long list of findings in favor of mindfulness. The contribution of Nakao and collaborators, joins the great number of studies that focus on issues surrounding adherence to treatment in patients with hemodialysis (Morgan, 2000). The differences of happiness according to sex and age, focus of the manuscript written by Caycho and collaborators, have also been studied, and are subject of interest of researchers who, however, have not found a satisfactory psychological explanation for them (Steptoe, Deaton & Stone 2015).

Despite the contributions of these manuscripts, there are areas that require some explanations as we proceed understanding the physical and mental health outcomes and treatment among individuals in the United States and across Latin America. United States and European-based scholarly literature present a wealth of empirical evidence discerning psychological models that neither clearly define nor address the needs and health behaviors equitably among whites and blacks (Blanchard, Kupperman, Sparling, Nehl, Rhodes, Courneya & Baker, 2009), or other economically marginalized populations (Schüz, Wurm, Ziegelmann, Wolff, Warner, Schwarzer, & Tesch-Römer, 2012). What is important to consider when addressing these issues in a region as unequal and diverse as Latin America, is that the study of psychological mechanisms should take into account the role of contextual variables.

In conclusion, this special issue on Health Psychology includes manuscripts with a variety of topics, which are currently being discussed in the scientific literature. With the continued interest on health and behavioral issues impacting diverse and marginalized populations, it is our intention to bring the reader of *Actualidades*

a multiplicity of important topics from well-noted scholars throughout the Latin American region. We hope that this special issue will be a point of reference to evaluate at both methodological and thematic levels the discussions and evolution of Health Psychology in Latin American context.

*Prof. Benjamín Reyes Fernández*

*Universidad de Costa Rica*

*Prof. Tamara A. Baker*

*University of Kansas*

*Guest Editors*

## References

- Black, D. S., & Slavich, G. M. (2016). Mindfulness meditation and the immune system: a systematic review of randomized controlled trials. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1373(1), 13-24. doi: 10.1111/nyas12998
- Blanchard, C. M., Kupperman, J., Sparling, P. B., Nehl, E., Rhodes, R. E., Courneya, K. S., & Baker, F. (2009). Do ethnicity and gender matter when using the theory of planned behavior to understand fruit and vegetable consumption? *Appetite*, 52(1), 15-20. doi: 10.1016/j.appet.2008.07.001
- Keng, S. L., Smoski, M. J., & Robins, C. J. (2011). Effects of mindfulness on psychological health: A review of empirical studies. *Clinical psychology review*, 31(6), 1041-1056. doi: 10.1016/j.cpr.2011.04.006
- Morgan, L. (2000). A decade review: methods to improve adherence to the treatment regimen among hemodialysis patients. *Nephrology Nursing Journal*, 27(3), 299-304. doi: 10.1111/j.1755-6686.2001.tb00127.x
- Schüz, B., Wurm, S., Ziegelmann, J. P., Wolff, J. K., Warner, L. M., Schwarzer, R., & Tesch-Römer, C. (2012). Contextual and individual predictors of physical activity: Interactions between environmental factors and health cognitions. *Health Psychology*, 31(6), 714. doi: 10.1037/a0027596
- Stephoe, A., Deaton, A., & Stone, A. A. (2015). Subjective wellbeing, health, and ageing. *The Lancet*, 385(9968), 640-648. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(13)61489-0