Coping, emotion and perceived health following myocardial infarction: Concurrent and predictive associations.

This paper examines concurrent and prospective relationships between coping, emotion outcomes and perceived health among first-time myocardial infarction (MI) patients over the first 6 months of adjustment. A longitudinal design was employed. Participants completed questionnaires at 3 time points; while inpatients (N = 128), at 2 months follow-up (N = 100) and at 6 months follow-up (N = 74). The questionnaires included measures of coping (COPE; C. S. Carver et al, 1989), positive and negative affect (Global Mood Scale; J. Denollet, 1993), anxiety (short form of Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory; T. M. Marteau and H. Bekker, 1992) and perceived health (Health Complaints Scale; Denollet, 1994). Both coping and outcomes tended to be stable across time. Significant concurrent relationships stressed the role of avoidant-, acceptance- and social/emotion-focused coping. Prospectively, results emphasized the adaptive influence of problem-focused coping. Coping was both concurrently and predictively associated with outcomes post-MI. A clear distinction between concurrent and predictive associations emerged. Problems associated with relying on cross-sectional data to inform theory and practice are highlighted. The clinical implications of the results for rehabilitation programmes are also outlined.