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Perception of diseases affects patients

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Perception of diseases affects patients (Thinkstock photos/Getty Images)

Researchers at the University of Granada have stated that, "the idea that patients have of their disease affects their own coping and adaptation to it".

They have developed a test for measuring and assessing chronic patients' cognitive representation of their disease. This advance will enable the development of clinical psychological treatments much more efficient than those currently employed.

Cognitive representation is based on "common sense", since patients are not experts and their ideas and perception of their disease are based on their own experience, self-knowledge and other sources (social, family environment, health center, etc).

Patients were given different tests and, although the study centered on patients with diabetes, this test is intended to be applicable to any patient with a chronic disease.

The results of the study carried out by Macarena De los Santos Roig and colleagues revealed that when patients perceive that their disease has significant impact on their lives, they face their disease more actively, (they seek social support, apply behavioural coping and express their emotions).

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