EXPANDED ATTRIBUTIONAL STYLE QUESTIONNAIRE (EASQ)

Reference:

Description of Measure:

A 96-item questionnaire that measures an individual’s explanatory style (positive versus negative).

The format of the EASQ is identical to that of the ASQ (Peterson et al., 1982; please see the ASQ page on this website). There are two main differences between the ASQ and the EASQ: (1) the EASQ is twice as long – done to increase the questionnaire’s reliability, and (2) the EASQ’s hypothetical events are all “bad” whereas the ASQ had half bad and half good.

The EASQ’s format: The questionnaire is made up of 24 hypothetical events. each followed by 4 questions: (1) a free-response question about the cause of the hypothetical event, (2) a question about whether the event has an internal or external cause (i.e., how much respondents believe they themselves are responsible for the event) (3) a question about whether the event has a stable or unstable cause (i.e., how much respondents believe the cause of the event is present over time), (4) a question about whether the event has a global or specific cause (i.e., how much the respondents believe the cause of the event occurs across varying conditions). The first question is not scored and is used to prepare the respondent to answer questions 2-4. Questions 2-4 are answered on a 7-point scale.

Abstracts of Selected Related Articles:


Of current interest are the causal attributions offered by depressives for the good and bad events in their lives. One important attributional account of depression is the reformulated learned helplessness model, which proposes that depressive symptoms are associated with an attributional style in which uncontrollable bad events are attributed to internal (versus external), stable (versus unstable), and global (versus specific) causes. We describe the Attributional Style Questionnaire, which measures individual differences in the use of these attributional dimensions. We report means, reliabilities, intercorrelations, and test-retest stabilities for a sample of 130 undergraduates. Evidence for the questionnaire’s validity is discussed. The Attributional Style Questionnaire promises to be a reliable and valid instrument.


Explanatory style is a cognitive personality variable reflecting the way that people habitually explain the causes of bad events. Explanatory style spans three dimensions-internality versus externality, stability versus instability, and globality versus specificity. Although explanatory style has an impressive array of correlates, including depression, achievement, and physical well-being, questions have recently been raised concerning its meaning and measurement. This article identifies and discusses these questions, concluding that
explanatory style is a useful construct that deserves further theoretical and empirical attention.


Objective: This study examined associations of two types of optimism (Peterson and Seligman’s optimistic explanatory style and Scheier and Carver’s dispositional optimism) with each other as well as with symptoms and immune status among human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)-infected men. Method: We related both types of optimism to HIV symptoms and to CD4 counts in a cross-sectional study of 78 men, and to change in CD4 counts in a 2-year prospective study of a subsample of these men. Results: Analyses controlled for age, education, employment status, duration since diagnosis, and azidothymidine (AZT) use. The two types of optimism were only minimally related to each other ($r = .25$). Cross-sectionally, higher levels of both types of optimism were associated with having fewer HIV symptoms, but a more optimistic explanatory style was related to having poorer immune status (lower CD4). Prospectively, an optimistic explanatory style was a substantial predictor of greater decline in CD4 counts after 2 years, after controlling for baseline CD4. Dispositional optimism was unrelated to CD4 counts. Neither health behaviors nor coping strategies mediated these relationships, and the relationships of optimistic explanatory style (and to a lesser extent, dispositional optimism) were independent of negative affectivity. Conclusions: These optimism measures tap different types of optimism, and although both are related to better subjective health in HIV-infected men, an optimistic explanatory style predicts greater decline in immune status over time. This latter relationship may be related to the unique stress and life experiences associated with having HIV

Scale: Contact author for permission to use items.