

## **Abstract**

**DISSERTATION:** Positive Psychosocial Predictors of Health-Promoting Behaviors for Cardiovascular Patients, Using the Stages of Change

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This study examines whether positive psychosocial variables can predict health-promoting behaviors in adults with cardiovascular disease, with the goal of enhancing the impact of interventions with this population. Specifically, this study includes four positive psychosocial variables: optimism, positive affect, perceived social support and purpose in life; and how they associate with stages of behavior change for three important health behaviors: smoking, exercise, and diet. The sample consisted of 300 adults, age 30 and above, with a self-reported history of cardiovascular disease, who completed a survey. Multinomial logistic regression (MLR) was used to analyze the data. Results indicated that the Transtheoretical Model's stages of change were an effective model for representing health behavior change in this population. Perceived social support and positive affect were the strongest psychosocial predictors of stage of change, of smoking cessation and exercise, respectively. Age and gender also had significant predictive power, as well as education level, although its impact was less clear. Optimism and purpose in life also made minor contributions to predicting behavior change. These findings contribute to an evidence base that can serve to inform effective interventions by utilizing positive psychosocial variables to improve health behaviors for those with cardiovascular disease.