Shepperd, J. A., & \*Howell, J. L. (in press). Unrealistic optimism and health. In K. Sweeny and M. Robbins (Eds.) *The Encyclopedia of Health Psychology, Volume 2 (The Social Bases of Health Behavior)*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell.

Abstract

People are unrealistically optimistic about future health outcomes, believing that they are less likely to experience adverse health outcomes relative to their peers and relatively to objective indicators of what is likely to occur. In this entry we distinguish between different types of unrealistic optimism. We also review three broad causes of unrealistic optimism in predictions about the future. Finally, we discuss the complex question of what are the consequences of unrealistic optimism and distinguish between research that suggests that unrealistic optimism can have positive health consequences and research that shows that it can have negative health consequences.

Full article available on request.