



Psychological Approaches to Chronic Disease Management (Healthcare Utilization and Cost)

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Health care has undergone a significant shift during the past century. Instead of targeting primarily acute diseases such as small pox, influenza, and tuberculosis, our current healthcare system manages more costly chronic conditions that include diabetes, asthma, Alzheimer's disease, arthritis, and somatization. Although Western medicine has evolved to effectively curb the incidence of acute conditions, it has not had similar success with chronic diseases. The astronomical costs associated with the management of chronic diseases have resulted in a healthcare crisis that underscores the imperative for effective treatment and management protocols.

Behavioral and psychological factors have repeatedly been shown to have a profound impact on the onset, progression, and management of chronic diseases. Traditional health care models of disease management do not adequately address the behavioral health issues associated with the current chronic disease epidemic. An integrated approach to disease management where experts in the fields of physical and behavioral medicine synthesize their knowledge to create psychologically informed management protocols offers a promising alternative to traditional medicine.



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