Health-damaging personality traits and verbal-autonomic dissociation: the role of self-control and environmental control.

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Abstract

This study tested predictions derived from D.C. Glass's (1977) uncontrollability model regarding the link between control-related personality attributes and the dissociation of affective and autonomic responses to stress. Pressured drive, measured by the Jenkins Activity Survey (D.S. Krantz, D.C. Glass, & M.L. Snyder, 1974), and emotional defensiveness, measured by the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (D.P. Crowne & D. Marlowe, 1964), were examined in relation to cardiovascular and affective responses to mental arithmetic in 31 male and 26 female college students. Pressured drive was positively associated with cardiovascular reactivity but unrelated to affect ratings. In contrast, emotional defensiveness was unrelated to cardiovascular reactivity, but high scores were associated with smaller increases in self-reported negative affect. The findings suggest that these potentially health-damaging personality attributes may influence stress response measures through independent mechanisms for maintaining environmental control and self-control.