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Author: Pamela Joy Meredith Jennifer Strong

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Attachment and Chronic Illness

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Paper 27

Attachment and Chronic Illness

Professor Pamela Joy Meredith^{1,2} & Emeritus Professor Jennifer Strong¹

¹School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, The University of Queensland, Australia, 4072.

p.meredith@uq.edu.au; j.strong@uq.edu.au

²Occupational Therapy, Central Queensland University, Australia, 4701.

p.meredith@cqu.edu.au

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Abstract

A small body of literature has considered associations between attachment theory and a range of chronic health conditions, with particular attention to mechanisms linking attachment insecurity and the development and management of these conditions. In this paper, two inceptive models are reviewed, followed by consideration of the emerging literature in this field, stimulated by emerging physiological and neurobiological evidence. Although implications for treatment are available, treatment protocols and outcome studies are rare. Further research is needed to develop a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the links between insecure attachment and chronic conditions with a view to developing and implementing treatment protocols. These emerging interventions must recognize the complex personal and social/physical environmental contexts within which chronic conditions manifest.

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