

Abstract of thesis entitled:

"A Structural Equation Modeling of Distress-Diathesis-Adjustment for Chinese Chronic Low Back Pain Patients"

Submitted by CHENG Kin-wing

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Chronic low back pain (CLBP) is a debilitating and expensive illness that usually has unclear organic causes. Patients of this disorder tend to have differential patterns of adjustment, a phenomenon which cannot be adequately accounted for by the pure biomedical model. As a result, it has stimulated a vast amount of research in examining the roles of psycho-social factors. Models of diathesis-stress have been proposed to be useful in explaining adjustment differences in the chronic pain population (Jensen & Karoly, 1991; Kerns, 1996). However, a paucity of research has evaluated and documented the specific types of diathesis models (moderation or mediation) for CLBP. The present study was designed: i) to investigate the moderating and mediating roles of diathesis variables (catastrophizing, self-efficacy, passive and active coping) in the relation between distress source (pain) and adjustment (disability and psychological dysfunction) in CLBP, ii) to assess the role of neuroticism in predicting adjustment outcome in CLBP, and iii) to compare the relative fitness of three hypothetical models for this disorder with structural equation modeling (SEM). Two hundred sixty-five Chinese CLBP patients (102 men and 163 women; Mean age = 41.75 years, SD = 11.56) participated in this one-month prospective research. Results indicated that the moderational model for CLBP received limited support, and that only one significant pain \times active coping interaction was found to explain partial

variance in psychological dysfunction, after the main effects of distress source and diathesis variables were controlled. On the other hand, the findings lent support to the mediational model for CLBP, in which neuroticism and pain significantly affected cognitive diathesis (catastrophizing and self-efficacy) that in turn, impacted on disability and psychological dysfunction through its direct effects and the indirect effects via passive coping. In the results of model comparison, findings suggested that the model in which disability was hypothesized to affect psychological dysfunction was the best one to account for the co-variance matrix of the present data. Implications and limitations of the present study were discussed.