D6.0: Stress and Inflammation in Health and Disease: A Theme for Biobehavioral Research

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Abstract:
Overview: Introduction: Biobehavioral research plays a significant role in advancing nursing knowledge. Despite the national recommendations, the number of biobehavioral studies remains limited. Potential reasons include insufficient familiarity with and inadequate appreciation for biobehavioral research. Using a common theme of stress and inflammation, the purpose of this symposium is to share how a biobehavioral theme can be applied to diverse clinical settings and to explore the utility of biobehavioral research in building and translating knowledge into useful bedside interventions and practice. Methods: A group of researchers interested in biobehavioral research collectively identified a common theme of stress and inflammation. Based on individual research interest areas, researchers reviewed, critiqued, and summarized the current knowledge and issues on the theme in cardiovascular, pulmonary (COPD and asthma), and cancer. Inflammatory biomarkers were limited to interleukin-1,-6, tumor necrosis factor, and C-reactive protein to keep the scope of the study feasible. Results: Increased levels of stress or increased levels of inflammatory biomarkers are common in persons with chronic diseases such as atherosclerosis, COPD, childhood asthma, and gynecological cancer. Increased inflammation has been associated with symptom exacerbation and disease progression. Yet, in few studies, biobehavioral perspectives have been used to examine the impact of psychological stress on inflammation contributing to disease outcomes. The types of inflammatory biomarkers investigated also varied by the disease or by the study population. Discussion/Conclusion: Stress and inflammation are a useful example of biobehavioral research theme, which can significantly contribute to the advances in nursing knowledge. Increased knowledge provides a scientific basis for developing primary and secondary prevention programs for multiple populations. Future biobehavioral research, however, needs to use the improved conceptual and methodological
approaches and should be expanded to include children and adolescents. We hope this symposium serves as a platform for greater enthusiasm for increased biobehavioral research.

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