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Higher Stress in Oncology Patients is Associated With Cognitive and Evening Physical Fatigue Severity

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Supplementary materials

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Abstract

Context.—Cognitive and physical fatigue are common symptoms experienced by oncology patients. Exposure to stressful life events (SLE), cancer-related stressors, coping styles, and levels of resilience may influence the severity of both dimensions of fatigue.

Objectives.—Evaluate for differences in global, cancer-specific, and cumulative life stress, as well as resilience and coping in oncology patients (n=1332) with distinct cognitive fatigue AND evening physical fatigue profiles.

Methods.—Latent profile analysis, which combined the two symptom scores, identified three subgroups of patients with distinct cognitive fatigue AND evening physical fatigue profiles (i.e., Low, Moderate, High). Patients completed measures of global, cancer-specific, and cumulative life stress as well measures of resilience and coping. Differences among the latent classes in the various measures were evaluated using parametric and nonparametric tests.

Results.—Compared to Low class, the other two classes reported higher global and cancer-specific stress. In addition, they reported higher occurrence rates for sexual harassment and being forced to touch prior to 16 years of age. Compared to the other two classes, High class reported lower resilience scores and higher use of denial, substance use, and behavioral disengagement.

Conclusion.—To decrease both cognitive and evening physical fatigue, clinicians need to assess for relevant stressors and initiate interventions to increase resilience and the use of engagement coping strategies. Additional research is warranted on the relative contribution of various social determinants of health to both cognitive and physical fatigue in oncology patients receiving chemotherapy.

Keywords

Cancer; chemotherapy; cognitive impairment; coping; fatigue; resilience; stress

Introduction

As noted in the National Comprehensive Cancer Network Guidelines,¹ fatigue is a multidimensional symptom that includes cognitive and physical dimensions and is influenced by a variety of risk factors. However, while no consistency exists in the definitions of or instruments used to assess physical and cognitive fatigue, based on the findings from a systematic review,² de Raaf and colleagues concluded that cognitive fatigue and physical fatigue are separate phenomenon that warrant evaluation.

It should be noted that similar to other chronic conditions (e.g., cardiac disease,³ multiple sclerosis,^{4–6} chronic fatigue syndrome^{7–11}), stress associated with cancer and its treatments, including premorbid exposure to stressful life events (SLEs) and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), may predispose patients to higher levels of fatigue.¹² This hypothesis is supported by a growing body of evidence that suggests that fatigue and stress are linked through bidirectional neuroinflammatory pathways that are mediated by the autonomic nervous system (ANS) and the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis.¹³ The experiences of acute and chronic stress, that exceed an individual's ability to adapt, results in increases in allostatic overload and associated increases in fatigue severity.^{14–23} Equally

important, the occurrence of traumatic ACEs is associated with increases in allostatic load in adulthood and exaggerated physiologic responses to environmental challenges (e.g., cancer diagnosis, receipt of chemotherapy).^{24–34}

Previous work by our group^{35–38} and others^{36–39} demonstrated that physical fatigue exhibits diurnal variability. This finding is supported by the fact that common and distinct phenotypic^{40–43} and molecular^{44–49} risk factors were identified for morning and evening physical fatigue. In addition, to support the question addressed in this paper, when morning physical fatigue and evening physical fatigue were evaluated as single symptoms using latent profile analysis (LPA),⁵⁰ patients with very high levels of morning physical fatigue or very high levels of evening physical fatigue reported higher levels of global stress and a higher number and greater impact from a variety of SLEs. In other studies that examined the links between fatigue and stress in patients undergoing chemotherapy,^{51–57} higher levels of perceived stress were associated with greater average fatigue severity. However, the majority of these studies were cross-sectional; assessed average fatigue; evaluated only women with breast cancer; examined only one type of stress; and did not evaluate the impact of specific SLEs and ACEs on fatigue severity.

The cognitive and behavioral processes that individuals employ to respond and adapt to global stress, cancer-specific stress, ACEs, and other SLEs may influence inter-individual variability in both cognitive and physical fatigue severity. Lazarus and Folkman⁵⁸ describe coping as a person's cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage or adapt and respond to their environment. Coping styles are often categorized as engagement (e.g., positive reframing, seeking support) and disengagement (e.g., avoidance, denial) behaviors.⁵⁹ Engagement strategies use more direct approaches to deal with or reduce stress and are typically associated with more adaptive responses. Disengagement strategies tend to be viewed as more avoidant and maladaptive.⁶⁰ In studies that examined the mediating effect of coping in relationship to fatigue severity, while disengagement strategies were associated with higher fatigue scores,^{61,62} engagement strategies were associated with lower levels of fatigue.^{63,64}

Resilience is a psychological construct that provides resistance to distress.^{65,66} Resilience is considered a dynamic mechanism that changes over time and can be influenced by life circumstances and one's environment.⁶⁷ Several studies found links among patients' level of resilience, fatigue, distress, and coping.^{65,68,69} However, the majority of these studies evaluated only patients with breast cancer and none examined these associations in oncology patients undergoing chemotherapy.

As noted above, given that fatigue encompasses both cognitive and physical dimensions and that these dimensions are separate phenomenon, it is reasonable to model these two symptoms together; identify subgroups of patients with distinct cognitive fatigue AND evening physical fatigue profiles; and evaluate for risk factors associated with the worst profiles. Therefore, in our previous study,⁷⁰ cognitive fatigue AND evening physical fatigue were modeled in a single joint LPA. Using clinically meaningful cutoff scores for the Attentional Function Index (i.e., cognitive fatigue)⁷¹ and the Lee Fatigue Scale (i.e., evening physical fatigue),⁷² three classes of patients with distinct cognitive AND evening physical fatigue profiles were identified (i.e., Low, Moderate, and High; Supplementary Fig. 1).

Given the paucity of research on the relationships between co-occurring cognitive and physical fatigue and stress, as well as their associations with coping and resilience, in this study of patients undergoing chemotherapy, we extend the findings from our previous report⁷⁰ and evaluated for differences in global, cancer-specific, and cumulative life stress, as well as resilience and coping among the three subgroups of patients with distinct cognitive and evening physical fatigue profiles. In addition, given the emerging evidence on the impact of SLEs and ACEs on fatigue in other chronic conditions,⁷³ differences in the occurrence rates and effects of SLEs among these fatigue classes were evaluated. Equally important, because it is challenging to interpret the results of three symptoms in a longitudinal LPA, evening physical fatigue was chosen for this analysis given its higher severity. Subsequent analyses will be done with co-occurring cognitive fatigue and morning physical fatigue.

Methods

Patients and Settings

This longitudinal study is described in detail elsewhere.⁷⁴ Eligible patients were 18 years of age; had a diagnosis of breast, gastrointestinal, gynecological, or lung cancer; had received chemotherapy within the preceding four weeks; were scheduled to receive at least two additional cycles of chemotherapy; were able to read, write, and understand English; and gave written informed consent. Patients were recruited from two Comprehensive Cancer Centers, one Veteran's Affairs hospital, and four community-based oncology programs. A total of 2234 patients were approached and 1343 consented to participate (60.1% response rate). The major reason for refusal was being overwhelmed with their cancer treatment.

Instruments

Demographic and Clinical Characteristics.—Patients completed a demographic questionnaire, Karnofsky Performance Status (KPS) scale,⁷⁵ Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT),⁷⁶ and Self-Administered Comorbidity Questionnaire (SCQ). The SCQ evaluates the occurrence, treatments for, and impact of 13 common medical conditions.⁷⁷ The MAX-2 score was used to evaluate the toxicity of various chemotherapy regimens.⁷⁸

Cognitive Fatigue and Evening Physical Fatigue Measures.—Cognitive fatigue was assessed using the Attentional Function Index (AFI) that evaluates an individual's perceived effectiveness in performing daily activities that are supported by attention and working memory.⁷¹

Physical fatigue was assessed using Lee Fatigue Scale (LFS).⁷² Total fatigue and energy scores were calculated as the mean of the 13 fatigue items and the five energy items, respectively. Higher scores indicate greater fatigue severity and higher levels of energy. Using separate questionnaires, patients rated each item based on how they felt within 30 minutes of awakening (i.e., morning fatigue, morning energy) and prior to going to bed (i.e., evening fatigue, evening energy).

Stress, Resilience, and Coping Measures.—The 14-item Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) was used as a measure of global perceived stress according to the degree that life circumstances are appraised as stressful over the course of the previous week.⁷⁹ Total PSS scores can range from 0 to 56. Its Cronbach's alpha was 0.89.

The 22-item Impact of Event Scale-Revised (IES-R) was used to measure cancer-related distress.^{80,81} Patients rated each item based on how distressing each potential difficulty was for them during the past week “with respect to their cancer and its treatment.” Three subscales evaluate levels of intrusion, avoidance, and hyperarousal perceived by the patient. The total score can range from 0 to 88. Sum scores of ≥ 24 indicate clinically meaningful post-traumatic symptomatology and scores of ≥ 33 indicate probable post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).⁸² Cronbach's alpha for the IES-R total score was 0.92.

The 30-item Life Stressor Checklist-Revised (LSC-R) is an index of lifetime trauma exposure.⁸³ The total LSC-R score is obtained by summing the total number of events endorsed (range of 0 to 30). If the patient endorsed an event, the patient was asked to indicate how much that stressor affected their life in the past year, from one (not at all) to five (extremely). These responses were summed to yield a total “affected” sum score. PTSD sum score was created based on the number of positively endorsed items (out of 21) that reflect the DSM-IV PTSD Criteria A for having experienced a traumatic event.

The 10-item Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CDRS) evaluates a patient's personal ability to handle adversity (e.g., “I am able to adapt when changes occur”).^{84,85} Total scores range from 0 to 40, with higher scores indicative of higher self-perceived resilience. The normative adult mean score in the U.S. is 31.8 (standard deviation [SD], 5.4),^{85,86} with an estimated minimal clinically important difference of 2.7.⁸⁷ Its Cronbach's alpha was 0.90.

The 28-item Brief COPE was used to assess patients' use of 14 coping strategies.⁸⁸ Use of each coping strategy was evaluated using two items and scores can range from two to eight, with higher scores indicating greater use of each strategy. Engagement coping strategies and their associated Cronbach's alphas include active coping (0.75), planning (0.74), positive reframing (0.79), acceptance (0.68), humor (0.83), religion (0.92), emotional support (0.77), and instrumental support (0.77). Disengagement coping strategies and their associated Cronbach's alphas include self-distraction (0.46), denial (0.72), venting (0.65), substance use (0.87), behavioral disengagement (0.57), and self-blame (0.73).

Study Procedures

Study was approved by the Committee on Human Research at the University of California, San Francisco and by the Institutional Review Board at each of the study sites. Written informed consent was obtained from all patients. Patients completed questionnaires in their homes, a total of six times over two cycles of chemotherapy (i.e., in the week prior to chemotherapy administration (assessments one and four), one week after chemotherapy administration (assessments two and five) and two weeks after chemotherapy administration (assessments three and six). Medical records were reviewed for disease and treatment information.

Data Analysis

LPA was used to identify subgroups of patients with distinct cognitive fatigue AND evening physical fatigue profiles, using Mplus version 8.4.⁸⁹ This LPA was done with the combined set of variables over time (i.e., using the AFI AND evening LFS scores obtained during the six assessments in a single LPA). This approach provides a profile description of these **two symptoms** with parallel profiles over time. Details of this procedure are described in our previous publication.⁷⁰ Additional data were analyzed using *SPSS* version 28 (IBM Corporation, Armonk, NY). Differences among the cognitive fatigue AND evening physical fatigue classes in stress, resilience, and coping were evaluated using parametric and nonparametric tests. Bonferroni corrected *P*-value of <0.017 was considered statistically significant for the pair-wise contrasts.

Results

Latent Class Solution

As noted in our previous publication,⁷⁰ three-class solution was selected as the best model fit. Cognitive fatigue AND evening physical fatigue classes were labeled as Low cognitive fatigue and Low evening physical fatigue (i.e., Low, 20.5%), Moderate cognitive fatigue and Moderate evening physical fatigue (i.e., Moderate, 39.6%), and High cognitive fatigue and high evening physical fatigue (i.e., High, 39.9%) based on clinically meaningful cut-off scores for the AFI and the LFS (Supplemental Fig. 1).

Demographic and Clinical Characteristics

As noted previously,⁷⁰ significant differences were found among the latent classes for many of the demographic and clinical characteristics (see Supplemental Table 1). In brief, compared to Low class, the other two classes were significantly younger, more likely to be female, more likely to be White, less likely to be Black, less likely to exercise on a regular basis, more likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer, less likely to be diagnosed with gastrointestinal cancer, more likely to self-report a diagnosis of depression, and more likely to have received previous cancer treatments.

Compared to the other two classes, High class was less likely to be married/partnered, less likely to be employed, more likely to self-report a diagnosis of back pain, and had a higher number of comorbidities. Compared to Low class, High class was more likely to live alone, more likely to have child care responsibilities, more likely to report a past or current history of smoking, had received a higher number of previous cancer treatments, and had a higher MAX 2 score.

Compared to other two classes, Moderate class had more years of education and a higher annual household income. Among the three classes, KPS scores followed the expected pattern (Low>Moderate>High).

Stress and Resilience Characteristics

For the PSS, IES-R total, the IES-R intrusion and hyperarousal subscales, the LSC-R affected sum and PTSD sum, the scores followed the same pattern (i.e.,

Low<Moderate<High). Compared to Low and Moderate classes, High class reported higher IES-R avoidance subscale and LSC-R total scores and lower CDRS scores (Table 1).

Occurrence of Life Stressors

Compared to Low and Moderate classes, High class reported higher occurrence rates for family violence in childhood, emotional abuse, physical neglect, physical abuse before and after age of 16, being forced to touch 16 years of age, jail of a family member, serious money problems, and serious physical or mental illness other than cancer (Table 2). In terms of sexual harassment, the rates of occurrence followed the expected pattern (i.e., Low<Moderate<High). Compared to Moderate class, High class experienced higher rates of forced to touch before the age of 16. Compared to Low class, High class experienced higher rates of jail and forced sex at the age of 16 or older.

Effects of Various Stressors

Compared to Moderate class, High class reported higher effect scores for family violence in childhood and parental separation or divorce. Compared to Low class, High class reported higher scores related to physical abuse and forced to touch before the age of 16, having a serious physical or mental illness other than cancer, caring for someone with severe physical or mental handicap, and sudden death of someone close. Compared to Low and Moderate classes, High class reported higher effect scores related to separation or divorce (self) or death of someone close (not sudden) (Table 3).

Coping Strategies

For engagement coping strategies, compared to Low and Moderate classes, High class reported lower scores for active coping and acceptance. Compared to Low class, Moderate class reported higher scores for planning and humor. Compared to Low class, other two classes reported higher scores for the use of instrumental support.

For the disengagement coping strategies, compared to Low class, other two classes reported higher use of self-distraction. Compared to Low and Moderate classes, High class reported higher use of denial, substance use, and behavioral disengagement. For venting and self-blame the scores followed the same pattern (i.e., Low<Moderate<High; Table 4).

Discussion

This study extends our previous work that identified three latent classes of patients with distinct cognitive fatigue AND evening physical fatigue severity profiles⁷⁰ to include associations with global, cancer-specific, and cumulative life stress, as well as coping and resilience. While our previous study found associations between higher levels of morning and evening physical fatigue severity (when they were evaluated as single symptoms) and stress in a sample of patients with heterogeneous types of cancer,⁵⁰ the current study is the first to evaluate both the occurrence and effects of SLEs associated with the severity of cognitive fatigue AND evening fatigue severity when both symptoms were modeled together.

Stress Measures

In terms of overall scores across the three stress measures (Table 1), the severity of global and cancer-specific stress, as well as the affected sum and PTSD sum scores, increased as the profiles of cognitive fatigue and evening physical fatigue worsened. One plausible explanation for this finding is that the cumulative effects of the various types of stress exceeded the patients' ability to adapt to demands with a resultant increase in allostatic overload. The clinical criteria for allostatic overload include the presence of generalized anxiety and low energy; significant impairments in social and/or occupational functioning; and the presence of a current identifiable source of distress.¹⁴ This hypothesis is supported by the findings from our previous study that identified that the severity of state and trait anxiety, as well as decrements in evening energy, role functioning, and social functioning were significantly different among our three latent classes.⁷⁰

Compared to Low class, High class reported higher occurrence rates for a number of ACEs including: family violence in childhood (31.2%), physical abuse (21%), and forced touching (17%) and forced sex (6.2%) at or before the age of 16 (Table 2). These findings highlight the importance of screening oncology patients for childhood maltreatment and previous stressful life events to develop individualized treatment plans that address past traumatic experiences. The Pediatric ACEs and Related Life Events Screener (PEARLS) can be used with adults and includes questions about bullying, discrimination, and food insecurity.⁹⁰ Additional research is needed to better understand the underlying mechanisms that link these ACEs with a higher symptom burden in adults undergoing chemotherapy.

While the IES-R total score for the High class (i.e., 24.2) meets the clinical criterion for subsyndromal PTSD,⁸² 23.4% of the patients in this class had scores of ≥ 33 . In addition, this class had the highest score for the PTSD subscale of the LSC-R and reported an average of four (range of 0 to 18) of the 21 stressors included in this subscale. These findings are consistent with previous reports that found positive associations with cognitive impairment^{91,92} or fatigue^{93,94} and PTSD in oncology patients.

Fatigue is a common symptom in individuals with inflammatory and autoimmune conditions as well as in individuals with psychiatric disorders provoked by stress.^{4,6,10,95,96} These illnesses are characterized by an underlying inflammatory state that leads to changes in brain signaling that provoke fatigue. Changes in behavior (e.g., weakness, malaise, listlessness, hypersomnia, depressed activity) precipitated by proinflammatory cytokines is often referred to as "sickness behavior".⁹⁷ Given that both cancer and its treatments contribute to increased levels of systemic neuroinflammation, it is not unexpected that the burden of multiple types of stress is associated with higher levels of both cognitive and physical fatigue.

Coping

In our study, the High class reported the highest use of the majority of the disengagement coping strategies (Table 5). Given that, in a previous study, individuals who experienced four or more categories of significant childhood maltreatment have higher rates of alcohol and substance use disorders,⁹⁸ this relationship warrants evaluation in oncology patients. Future studies need to evaluate the socio-cultural contexts that influence coping styles including

associations with SLEs, ACE's, and other social determinants of health. For example, individuals with less education and lower income were more likely to use “maladaptive” coping strategies.⁹⁹ In addition, hypervigilant behaviors and the use of avoidance coping may be critical ways that individuals survive and adapt to harsh environments.¹⁰⁰

It is interesting to note that while self-distraction is categorized as a disengagement or “maladaptive coping strategy,⁶⁰ compared to the other two classes, Low class reported significantly higher use of this behavior. Evidence suggests that in the face of extreme stress, individuals may gravitate towards “maladaptive” coping strategies because they provide immediate relief and are easily accessible despite socioeconomic factors or the availability of resources.¹⁰⁰ Our findings on the use of self-distraction are consistent with the results of a randomized controlled trial that found that patients with advanced cancer undergoing chemotherapy who participated in various self-distraction exercises experienced a greater reduction in stress than the control group.¹⁰¹ Given the potential benefits of self-distraction to decrease symptom severity and distress in oncology patients undergoing chemotherapy, additional research is warranted to investigate the role of self-distraction as an adaptive rather than a maladaptive behavior.

Equally important, in a study of patients with advanced lung cancer,¹⁰² self-blame was associated with increased levels of insomnia and worse emotional well-being. In contrast, positive reframing was associated with lower levels of fatigue. Given these findings, clinicians need to discourage the use of maladaptive coping strategies, particularly self-blame and promote the use of adaptive coping strategies such as positive reframing.

Resilience—Compared to normative data for adults in the U.S.,⁸⁵ the High class' CDRS scores represent clinically meaningful decrements in resilience. Evidence suggests that spirituality may help cancer patients make meaning from their cancer experience with a resultant enhancement of resilience.^{103,104} In our previous report,⁷⁰ compared to Low class, High class reported lower spiritual well-being scores. In addition, patients' perception of social support is highly correlated with resilience.^{105–108} Given that higher resilience is linked to better active coping with disease-related demands⁶⁷ and better recovery from traumatic events,^{84,109} future research is warranted to better understand how clinicians can support improved perceptions of social support and spiritual well-being.

Limitations—Several limitations warrant consideration. While six assessments were done over two cycles of chemotherapy, patients were not assessed prior to the initiation of chemotherapy. Second, because the majority of the sample was well-educated, female, and homogenous in terms of race/ethnicity, findings may not generalize to men and minority patients. Because the major reason for refusal to participate was “being overwhelmed with treatment”, these findings may under-estimate patients' level of stress.

Conclusions and Implications for Practice and Research—The clinical relevance of the use of engagement type coping strategies and enhancements in resilience to decrease fatigue and stress in oncology patients undergoing chemotherapy is apparent. The identification of patients who have experienced significant SLEs, including ACEs, that predate their cancer diagnosis through the use of screening tools would allow clinicians

to tailor stress reduction interventions. In addition, clinicians need to consider that coping strategies are interconnected to a larger socio-cultural context that allows for adaptation to a wide range of environmental conditions and circumstances.

Understanding the biological mechanism(s) through which social determinants of health influence disparities in coping strategies and resilience in oncology patients is an important focus for future studies. Large studies that include equitable representation of minority groups across socioeconomic strata are needed. The use of instruments that capture the influences of economic stability, access to education and health care, as well as neighborhood and environmental safety are important upstream contributors to disengagement type coping and increased symptom burden. Finally, future studies should investigate a variety of approaches to increase/improve patients' level of social support and use of engagement type coping strategies.

Supplementary Material

Refer to Web version on PubMed Central for supplementary material.

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Key Message

This study evaluated for associations between cognitive fatigue and evening physical fatigue and stress, coping, and resilience in oncology patients undergoing chemotherapy. Higher levels of stress, lower levels of resilience, and increased use of disengagement coping strategies were associated with greater cognitive fatigue and evening physical fatigue.

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Table 1
Differences in Stress and Resilience Measures Among the Cognitive Fatigue and Evening Physical Fatigue Latent Classes at Enrollment.

| Measures ^a | Low Cognitive Fatigue and Low Evening Physical Fatigue (0) 20.5% (n=273) | Moderate Cognitive Fatigue and Moderate Evening Physical Fatigue (1) 39.6% (n=528) | High Cognitive Fatigue and High evening Physical Fatigue (2) 39.9% (n=531) | Statistics |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) | |
| PSS total score (range 0 to 56) | 13.8 (6.9) | 16.1 (6.5) | 23.5 (7.7) | F=215.38, p<0.001 0 < 1 < 2 |
| IES-R total score (24.0 –Clinically meaningful PTSD symptomatology) (33.0 –Probable PTSD) | 13.8 (10.4) | 16.1 (10.9) | 24.2 (14.6) | F=81.07, p<0.001 0 < 1 < 2 |
| IES-R intrusion | 0.6 (0.6) | 0.8 (0.6) | 1.2 (0.8) | F=69.68, p<0.001 0 < 1 < 2 |
| IES-R avoidance | 0.8 (0.7) | 0.9 (0.6) | 1.1 (0.7) | F=17.62, p<0.001 0 and 1 < 2 |
| IES-R hyperarousal | 0.3 (0.40) | 0.5 (0.5) | 1.0 (0.8) | F=139.58, p<0.001 0 < 1 < 2 |
| LSC-R total score (range 0–30) | 5.0 (3.3) | 5.6 (3.4) | 7.2 (4.5) | F=28.17, p<0.001 0 and 1 < 2 |
| LSC-R affected sum score (range 0–150) | 8.3 (7.2) | 10.4 (9.7) | 15.4 (12.7) | F=39.20, p<0.001 0 < 1 < 2 |
| LSC-R PTSD sum score (range 0–21) | 2.2 (2.5) | 2.8 (2.6) | 3.9 (3.5) | F=27.87, p<0.001 0 < 1 < 2 |
| CDRS total score (range 0–40) (31.8 (±5.4) – normative mean score for the U.S.population) | 32.0 (6.3) | 31.7 (5.4) | 27.4 (6.5) | F=81.83, p<0.001 0 and 1 > 2 |

Abbreviations: CDRS, Connor Davidson Resilience Scal.; IES-R, impact of event scale – revised; LSC-R, life stressor checklist-revised; PSS, perceived stress scale; PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder; SD, standard deviation

^aClinically meaningful cutoff scores or range of scores

Differences Among the Cognitive Fatigue and Evening Physical Fatigue Subgroups in the Percentage of Patients Exposed to Specific Stressors.

Table 2

| Stressful Life Event | Low cognitive Fatigue and Low Evening Physical Fatigue (0) 20.5% (n=273) % (n) | Moderate Cognitive Fatigue and Moderate Evening Physical Fatigue (1) 39.6% (n=528) % (n) | High Cognitive Fatigue and High Evening Physical Fatigue (2) 39.9% (n=531) % (n) | Statistics |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Interpersonal Violence, Abuse, and Neglect Stressors | | | | |
| Family violence in childhood | 17.6 (38) | 20.1 (85) | 31.2 (120) | $\chi^2=19.36, P<0.001$ 0 and 1 < 2 |
| Emotional abuse | 10.9 (24) | 17.9 (76) | 32.0 (124) | $\chi^2=43.30, P<0.001$ 0 and 1 < 2 |
| Physical neglect | 1.8 (4) | 2.8 (12) | 8.7 (34) | $\chi^2=20.73, P<0.001$ 0 and 1 < 2 |
| Sexual harassment | 6.9 (15) | 17.8 (75) | 24.9 (96) | $\chi^2=30.19, P<0.001$ 0 < 1 < 2 |
| Physical abuse - <16 years | 12.0 (26) | 9.4 (40) | 21.0 (81) | $\chi^2=23.20, P<0.001$ 0 and 1 < 2 |
| Physical abuse - 16 years | 9.7 (21) | 11.6 (49) | 17.7 (68) | $\chi^2=9.85, P=0.007$ 0 and 1 < 2 |
| Forced to touch - <16 years | 10.4 (22) | 7.4 (31) | 17.0 (66) | $\chi^2=18.54, P<0.001$ 1 < 2 |
| Forced to touch - 16 years | 3.3 (7) | 4.7 (20) | 9.0 (35) | $\chi^2=10.14, P=0.006$ 0 and 1 < 2 |
| Forced sex - <16 years | 3.7 (8) | 3.1 (13) | 6.2 (24) | $\chi^2=4.88, P=0.087$ |
| Forced sex - 16 years | 3.3 (7) | 5.5 (23) | 9.3 (36) | $\chi^2=9.40, P=0.009$ 0 < 2 |
| Other Stressors | | | | |
| Been in a serious disaster | 40.7 (87) | 40.9 (174) | 40.9 (160) | $\chi^2=0.01, P=0.997$ |
| Seen serious accident | 31.2 (67) | 33.4 (142) | 32.8 (129) | $\chi^2=0.33, P=0.847$ |
| Had serious accident or injury | 24.2 (52) | 21.4 (90) | 27.4 (106) | $\chi^2=3.97, P=0.137$ |
| Jail (family member) | 17.6 (38) | 16.1 (68) | 27.1 (106) | $\chi^2=16.63, P<0.001$ 0 and 1 < 2 |
| Jail (self) | 3.2 (7) | 5.9 (25) | 9.7 (38) | $\chi^2=10.07, P=0.007$ 0 < 2 |
| Foster care or put up for adoption | 2.3 (5) | 1.9 (8) | 3.1 (12) | $\chi^2=1.24, P=0.539$ |

| Stressful Life Event | Low cognitive Fatigue and Low Evening Physical Fatigue (0) 20.5% (n=273) % (n) | Moderate Cognitive Fatigue and Moderate Evening Physical Fatigue (1) 39.6% (n=528) % (n) | High Cognitive Fatigue and High Evening Physical Fatigue (2) 39.9% (n=531) % (n) | Statistics |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Separated/divorced (parents) | 17.4 (38) | 20.2 (86) | 25.8 (101) | $\chi^2=6.68, P=0.035$ no significant pairwise contrasts |
| Separated/divorced (self) | 32.4 (71) | 34.0 (145) | 40.5 (158) | $\chi^2=5.43, P=0.066$ |
| Serious money problems | 15.1 (33) | 13.9 (59) | 29.2 (114) | $\chi^2=33.72, P<0.001$ 0 and 1 < 2 |
| Had serious physical or mental illness (not cancer) | 14.5 (32) | 15.5 (66) | 25.2 (99) | $\chi^2=16.05, P<0.001$ 0 and 1 < 2 |
| Abortion or miscarriage | 44.9 (70) | 44.8 (148) | 43.3 (142) | $\chi^2=0.19, P=0.908$ |
| Separated from child | 1.0 (2) | 1.7 (7) | 3.2 (12) | $\chi^2=3.90, P=0.142$ |
| Care for child with handicap | 3.9 (8) | 3.6 (15) | 4.2 (16) | $\chi^2=0.21, P=0.901$ |
| Care for someone with severe physical or mental handicap | 22.5 (48) | 22.7 (96) | 27.3 (104) | $\chi^2=2.76, P=0.252$ |
| Death of someone close (sudden) | 45.2 (98) | 48.5 (204) | 52.8 (201) | $\chi^2=3.43, P=0.180$ |
| Death of someone close (not sudden) | 77.5 (165) | 80.8 (336) | 78.0 (298) | $\chi^2=1.31, P=0.518$ |
| Seen robbery/mugging | 18.3 (40) | 19.9 (84) | 26.4 (103) | $\chi^2=7.24, P=0.027$ no significant pairwise contrasts |
| Been robbed/mugged | 22.5 (49) | 24.6 (104) | 31.3 (120) | $\chi^2=7.02, P=0.030$ no significant pairwise contrasts |

Table 3
Differences Among the Cognitive Fatigue and Evening Physical Fatigue Latent Classes in the Effect of Stressors on Life in the Past Year.

| Stressful Life Event ^a | Low Cognitive Fatigue and Low Evening Physical Fatigue (0) 20.5% (n=273) | | Moderate Cognitive Fatigue and Moderate Evening Physical Fatigue (1) 39.6% (n=528) | | High Cognitive Fatigue and High Evening Physical Fatigue (2) 39.9% (n=531) | | Statistics |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) | |
| Interpersonal violence, abuse, and neglect stressors | | | | | | | |
| Family violence in childhood | 1.7 (1.0) | 1.7 (1.1) | 2.1 (1.2) | | | | KW=8.73, P=0.013 1 < 2 |
| Emotional abuse | 2.3 (1.5) | 2.4 (1.3) | 2.8 (1.3) | | | | KW=5.23, P=0.070 |
| Physical neglect | 3.3 (1.7) | 2.9 (1.5) | 2.7 (1.3) | | | | KW=0.61, P=0.737 |
| Sexual harassment | 1.4 (1.1) | 1.4 (0.9) | 1.6 (1.0) | | | | KW=1.96, P=0.376 |
| Physical abuse - <16 years | 1.4 (0.8) | 1.9 (1.3) | 2.1 (1.3) | | | | KW=6.52, P=0.038 0 < 2 |
| Physical abuse - 16 years | 1.7 (1.2) | 1.9 (1.2) | 1.9 (1.2) | | | | KW=0.86, P=0.651 |
| Forced to touch - <16 years | 1.4 (1.0) | 2.0 (1.4) | 2.3 (1.4) | | | | KW=9.34, P=0.009 0 < 2 |
| Forced to touch - 16 years | 1.0 (0.0) | 2.1 (1.4) | 2.0 (1.2) | | | | KW=6.10, P=0.047 no significant pairwise contrasts |
| Forced sex - <16 years | 1.1 (0.4) | 2.5 (1.5) | 2.0 (1.3) | | | | KW=4.60, P=0.100 |
| Forced sex - 16 years | 1.6 (1.5) | 2.0 (1.3) | 1.6 (1.0) | | | | KW=2.58, P=0.276 |
| Other Stressors | | | | | | | |
| Been in a serious disaster | 1.2 (0.6) | 1.4 (0.9) | 1.4 (0.8) | | | | KW=5.26, P=0.072 |
| Seen serious accident | 1.4 (0.8) | 1.4 (0.8) | 1.6 (0.9) | | | | KW=2.92, P=0.232 |
| Had serious accident or injury | 1.4 (1.0) | 1.5 (1.0) | 1.7 (1.1) | | | | KW=5.25, P=0.073 |
| Jail (family member) | 1.7 (1.1) | 1.7 (1.2) | 2.1 (1.5) | | | | KW=3.35, P=0.188 |
| Jail (self) | 2.0 (1.3) | 1.7 (1.1) | 1.7 (1.3) | | | | KW=2.53, P=0.767 |
| Foster care or put up for adoption | 2.8 (2.1) | 2.0 (1.4) | 2.3 (1.4) | | | | KW=0.37, P=0.833 |
| Separated/divorced (parents) | 1.6 (1.0) | 1.5 (0.9) | 2.0 (1.3) | | | | KW=8.43, P=0.015 1 < 2 |
| Separated/divorced (self) | 1.6 (1.1) | 2.0 (1.3) | 2.4 (1.5) | | | | KW=16.55, P<0.001 0 and 1 < 2 |
| Serious money problems | 2.3 (1.5) | 2.4 (1.7) | 3.0 (1.7) | | | | KW=6.82, P=0.033 no significant pairwise contrasts |

| Stressful Life Event ^a | Low Cognitive Fatigue and Low Evening Physical Fatigue (0) 20.5% (n=273) | Moderate Cognitive Fatigue and Moderate Evening Physical Fatigue (1) 39.6% (n=528) | High Cognitive Fatigue and High Evening Physical Fatigue (2) 39.9% (n=531) | Statistics |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) | |
| Had serious physical or mental illness (not cancer) | 1.9 (1.2) | 2.4 (1.4) | 2.7 (1.3) | KW=10.12, P=0.006 0 < 2 |
| Abortion or miscarriage | 1.4 (0.8) | 1.5 (1.0) | 1.7 (1.1) | KW=4.75, P=0.093 |
| Separated from child | 2.5 (2.1) | 2.6 (1.6) | 3.1 (1.6) | KW=0.68, P=0.712 |
| Care for child with handicap | 3.4 (1.1) | 3.3 (1.6) | 3.2 (1.4) | KW=0.06, P=0.971 |
| Care for someone with severe physical or mental handicap | 2.2 (1.4) | 2.5 (1.4) | 2.8 (1.5) | KW=6.13, P=0.047 0 < 2 |
| Death of someone close (sudden) | 1.8 (1.1) | 2.1 (1.3) | 2.4 (1.4) | KW=13.20, P=0.001 0 < 2 |
| Death of someone close (not sudden) | 1.9 (1.2) | 2.1 (1.2) | 2.5 (1.4) | KW=27.20, P<0.001 0 and 1 < 2 |
| Seen robbery/mugging | 1.4 (0.8) | 1.5 (1.1) | 1.6 (1.1) | KW=4.57, P=0.102 |
| Been robbed/mugged | 1.5 (1.0) | 1.6 (1.1) | 1.7 (1.1) | KW=2.90, P=0.235 |

Abbreviations: SD, standard deviation

^aRange = 1 “not at all” to 5 “extremely”

^bThese data are reported for those patients who reported the occurrence of the stressor (see Table 4)

Table 4
Differences Among the Cognitive Fatigue and Evening Physical Fatigue Latent Classes in the Brief COPE Subscale Scores.

| Subscale* | Low Cognitive Fatigue and Physical Fatigue (0) 20.5% (n=273) | Moderate Cognitive Fatigue and Evening Physical Fatigue (1) 39.6% (n=528) | High Cognitive Fatigue and Evening Physical Fatigue (2) 39.9% (n=531) | Statistics |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) | |
| Engagement coping strategies | | | | |
| Active coping | 6.2 (1.8) | 6.2 (1.6) | 5.7 (1.6) | F=13.72, $P<0.001$ 0 and 1 > 2 |
| Planning | 5.1 (2.0) | 5.4 (1.8) | 5.3 (1.7) | F=3.29, $P=0.37$ 0 < 1 |
| Positive reframing | 5.4 (2.1) | 5.5 (2.0) | 5.3 (1.9) | F=0.63, $P=0.531$ |
| Acceptance | 6.9 (1.4) | 6.9 (1.2) | 6.5 (1.4) | F=11.48, $P<0.001$ 0 and 1 > 2 |
| Humor | 4.1 (2.1) | 4.5 (1.9) | 4.3 (2.0) | F=4.41, $P=0.012$ 0 < 1 |
| Religion | 5.2 (2.4) | 4.9 (2.3) | 5.1 (2.2) | F=1.62, $P=0.199$ |
| Using emotional support | 6.2 (1.8) | 6.5 (1.7) | 6.2 (1.6) | F=3.42, $P=0.033$ no significant pairwise contrasts |
| Using instrumental support | 5.1 (1.9) | 5.4 (1.8) | 5.4 (1.7) | F=3.63, $P=0.027$ 0 < 1 and 2 |
| Disengagement coping strategies | | | | |
| Self-distraction | 5.1 (1.9) | 5.6 (1.7) | 5.5 (1.5) | F=7.53, $P<0.001$ 0 < 1 and 2 |
| Denial | 2.4 (1.0) | 2.3 (0.9) | 2.7 (1.3) | F=12.11, $P<0.001$ 0 and 1 < 2 |
| Venting | 3.4 (1.5) | 3.9 (1.7) | 4.3 (1.6) | F=25.99, $P<0.001$ 0 < 1 < 2 |
| Substance use | 2.2 (0.7) | 2.2 (0.6) | 2.3 (0.9) | F=5.00, $P=0.007$ 0 and 1 < 2 |
| Behavioral disengagement | 2.2 (0.7) | 2.1 (0.5) | 2.4 (0.9) | F=22.16, $P<0.001$ 0 and 1 < 2 |
| Self-blame | 2.4 (0.9) | 2.7 (1.1) | 3.3 (1.4) | F=50.56, $P<0.001$ 0 < 1 < 2 |

Abbreviation: SD = standard deviation

^aEach item was rate on a 4-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (“I haven’t been doing this at all”) to 4 (“I have been doing this a lot”). Each coping strategy is evaluated using 2 items. Scores can range from 2 to 8 with higher scores indicating greater use of each of the coping strategies.

Table 5

Characteristics Associated With Membership in the Moderate and High Cognitive Fatigue and Evening Physical Fatigue Latent Classes.

| Characteristic ^a | Moderate Cognitive Fatigue and Moderate Evening Physical Fatigue | High Cognitive Fatigue and High Evening Physical Fatigue |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Stress characteristics | | |
| Higher perceived stress scale score | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Higher impact of event scale-revised total score | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Higher impact of event scale-revised intrusion score | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Higher impact of event scale-revised avoidance score | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Higher impact of event scale-revised hyperarousal score | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Higher life stressor checklist-revised total score | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Higher life stressor checklist-revised affected sum score | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Higher life stressor checklist-revised PTSD sum score | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Lower Connor Davidson Resilience Scale total score | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Higher occurrence of life stressors | | |
| Family violence in childhood | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Emotional abuse | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Physical neglect | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sexual harassment | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Physical abuse - <16 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Physical abuse - 16 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Forced to touch - 16 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Forced sex - 16 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Jail (family member) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Jail (self) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Serious money problems | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Had serious physical or mental illness (not cancer) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Higher effect of life stressors | | |
| Physical abuse- <16 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Forced to touch - <16 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Separated/divorced (self) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Characteristic ^a | Moderate Cognitive Fatigue and Moderate Evening Physical Fatigue | High Cognitive Fatigue and High Evening Physical Fatigue |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Had serious physical or mental illness (not cancer) | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Caring for someone with severe physical or mental handicap | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Death of someone close (sudden) | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Death of someone close (not sudden) | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Use of coping strategies | | |
| Lower use of active coping | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Lower use of acceptance | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Higher use of planning | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Higher use of humor | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Higher use of instrumental support | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Higher use of self-distraction | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Higher use of denial | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Higher use of venting | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Higher use of substance use | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Higher use of behavioral disengagement | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Higher use of self-blame | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

^aComparisons done with the low cognitive fatigue and low evening physical fatigue group.