DYADIC OPTIMISM IN THE CONTEXT OF TRANSPLANT SURGERY

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INTRODUCTION / AIM
Optimism is characterized by positive expectations about future outcomes. Protective factors that influence health and well-being, such as optimism, are increasingly being incorporated into dyadic health research. As surgery places extensive stress on dyads, the current research aims to understand the dyadic influence of optimism on catastrophizing prior to organ transplant surgery.

METHODS
Participants were recruited as part of a larger prospective study on psychosocial factors influencing adjustment to organ transplantation. The final sample consisted of 93 adults on the waitlist for a lung (82%) or heart (18%) transplant and their informal caregivers. As part of the larger study, participants completed measures of optimism (LOT-R; Scheier et al., 1994), health catastrophizing (modified PCS; Sullivan et al., 1995), and demographics.

RESULTS
Statistical analyses were conducted using the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model. Patients’ and caregivers’ optimism was significantly (p <.05) related to their own level of catastrophizing, $B=-5.96$ and $B=-5.01$, respectively. However, no partner effects were found (i.e., caregiver optimism was unrelated to patient catastrophizing and vice versa).

DISCUSSION / CONCLUSIONS
Optimism was negatively associated with health catastrophizing in a sample of individuals and their caregivers preparing to undergo major surgery. To date, limited research has assessed protective factors that are related to well-being in the context of major surgery. Optimism has been identified as a potential target for interventions, insofar as it may alter the experience of pain and increase positive social interactions and positive mood which may, in turn, improve quality of life outcomes.

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