

MOTIVATIONS FOR HEALTH BEHAVIORS AMONG ADOLESCENTS

Previous efforts to understand health behaviors in motivational terms have focused primarily on the role of specific health relevant beliefs and motivations, such as perceptions of the severity of a particular disease or conditions and beliefs about one's specific vulnerability to that disease or condition (Taal et al., 1990). According to this perspective, a person should be motivated to adopt or change a specific health behavior to the extent that they feel personally vulnerable to the disease and perceive the consequences of failing to take appropriate action as severe. Although intuitively reasonable, a good deal of research shows that such models provide only a partial explanation of health behavior. In the present chapter, an alternative view is presented that states that people engage in health behaviors to meet a variety of different needs, only some of which have to do with health maintenance or promotion *per se*. Moreover, according to this perspective, if we wish to understand and change health behaviors, we must gain some understanding of the multiple needs or functions these behaviors serve and attempt to devise alternative ways to meet these same needs.

Cooper, M.L., & Shapiro, C.M. (1997). Motivations for health behaviors among adolescents. In J.A. McNamara, Creating the compliant patient, pp. 25-46. Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Human Growth and Development, University of Michigan.