

/RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SOCIAL SUPPORT
AND HEALTH, ILLNESS AND MORTALITY/ ^{no}

by

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Introduction

This paper discusses the relationships between social support and physical health, onset of illness, and mortality. My goal is to investigate relationships, examine the meaning of findings, and evaluate the appropriateness of intervention based on results. The three sections that comprise this report correspond to the three criteria according to which the literature is evaluated. The first analyzes several different conceptions of social support. The second outlines the methodological problems raised in the literature, as well as additional problems evident to me. Finally findings relating social support to physical health, onset of illness, and mortality are organized according to these same categories: health, illness, and mortality. A critical overview of this literature, and suggestions for further research, conclude the report.

Approximately 150 articles were identified in the process of assembling a preliminary bibliography. Sources included Psychological Abstracts, Medline, Inventory of Marriage and Family Literature, and public health journals. These articles represent a small portion of approximately 1500 articles available from the 10 years to which I limited my study.