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Lovesick: How Couples' Relationships Influence Health

Unhappy intimate partner relationships take a toll on mental and physical health, elevating the risk for many disorders including depression, cardiovascular disease, metabolic syndrome, and diabetes. Relationship distress impacts key physiological systems implicated in each of these disorders, including the sympathetic and parasympathetic branches of the autonomic nervous system, the immune system's inflammatory response, and the gut microbiota. The multiple stresses of a troubled relationship are depressogenic, and the development of a mood disorder sets the stage for psychological and biological vulnerability. Depression provides a central pathway to immune dysregulation, inflammation, and poor health. Sleep and obesity can simultaneously feed off depression as they fuel its fires. In addition, the strong mutual influences that the members of a couple have on each other's mental and physical health trajectories provides a new way to view the health implications of couples' convergence or interdependence. Partner similarities in health behaviors, gene expression, immune profiles and the gut microbiota offer new ways to consider the health advantages and risks of marriage and divorce, providing new perspectives on couples' interdependence, as well as new directions for research.

Keck Seminar

Friday, March 1, 4pm

BioScience Research Collaborative

Auditorium



The Gulf Coast Consortia is a collaboration of:

Rice University | Baylor College of Medicine | University of Houston | University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston
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