

Am J Community Psychol. 2002 Feb;30(1):133-48.

**Evaluating attributions for an illness based upon the name: chronic fatigue syndrome, myalgic encephalopathy and Florence Nightingale disease.**

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In recent years, considerable discussion has occurred about stigma surrounding the name given to an illness currently known as chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS). Although patients and medical personnel have expressed varying opinions on this issue, no studies have evaluated how beliefs about the illness change based upon the type of name used for diagnostic purposes. Proposals have been put forth to rename the illness with an eponym (a famous patient's or researcher's name) or with a less trivial sounding, more medically based type of name. In this study, attributions about CFS were measured in three groups of medical trainees. All groups read the same case study of a person with classic symptoms of chronic fatigue syndrome, with the only difference being in the type of name given. Trainees then were asked to provide attributions about certain aspects of the illness, including its cause, severity, and prognosis. Results suggested that, across name conditions, most trainees appeared to consider the symptom complex of CFS a serious illness resulting in poor quality of life. In addition, findings indicated that the name, chronic fatigue syndrome, may be regarded less seriously than the Myalgic Encephalopathy name with respect to some important aspects of the illness. In this study, specialty of medical trainee also played a role in how the illness was perceived.

PMID: 11928774 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]