

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS AND DELAYED HEALING

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While some attention has been placed on understanding the biological factors influencing delayed healing, relatively little has been placed on the psychosocial factors involved. It is now recognised that psychosocial factors – anxiety and depression, social isolation, low economic status and pain, for example – are associated with delayed healing of wounds. However, little research has been undertaken to examine how these factors may not only be a consequence of delayed healing, but may also play an important role in delaying healing. It is suggested that an evaluation of a patient's psychosocial status should be included as part of a general wound assessment as failure to adequately manage psychosocial issues can lead to an adverse response and further healing problems. The future needs to focus on raising the profile of these issues and on developing sensitive, reliable and user-friendly tools that detect and assess their impact on the patient.