

Disease Cause Attribution and Patients' Preference for Low versus High Self-Management Treatments

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Abstract

This research investigates how the attribution of a disease cause (one's lifestyle vs. genes) influences consumers' preferences for treatments that vary in the level of patient self-management. Across three studies, including one conducted with real patients, we demonstrate that consumers' fatalistic determinism and self-control traits are critical moderating factors in consumer preference between treatments in response to the cause of the disease information. Individuals with a lower determinism/lower self-control are more likely to prefer a treatment that demands a low level of self-management when they attribute a disease to genetic factors than when they attribute it to lifestyle. By contrast, the choice of treatment by individuals with higher determinism/higher self-control is not affected by the attribution of a disease. We suggest that medical practitioners consider the influence of the disease attribution on consumer preference for available treatment options.

Keywords: *medical decision-making; genetic attribution; treatment preference*

Track: Consumer Behaviour