

Social Integration

14th Patient/parents International Conference

Antalya Turkey May 2011



**No man is an island,
entire of itself..**

John Donne 1572- 1631

What is social Integration?

- Participation in a broad range of social relationships – an active engagement
- A sense of commonality and identification with social roles
- Social connectedness seems to benefit health directly
- The potential to motivate people towards self care
- Promoting a positive effect and self worth

Cohen S, Underwood L, Gottlieb B. Measuring and intervening in social support.
2000

For most people integration is:

- To become independent of family, living one's own life
- To have a steady job, earning one's living
- Forming close relationships, friendships and perhaps romantic relationships
- Creating one's own family
- Being productive and responsible

Failing to achieve social integration

- You do not need to have thalassaemia to fail in these aims!
- Thalassaemia patients have an additional weight to bear but the ability to integrate is not reduced
- Many people are regarded as maladjusted or problematic if they do not achieve
- Patients should be regarded as social equals and not as different from a young age

Evgenia Georganda, Patras, 1986

Education

- Loss of school days
- Loss of confidence
- Poor health
- Educational failure
- Poor self esteem

Friendships

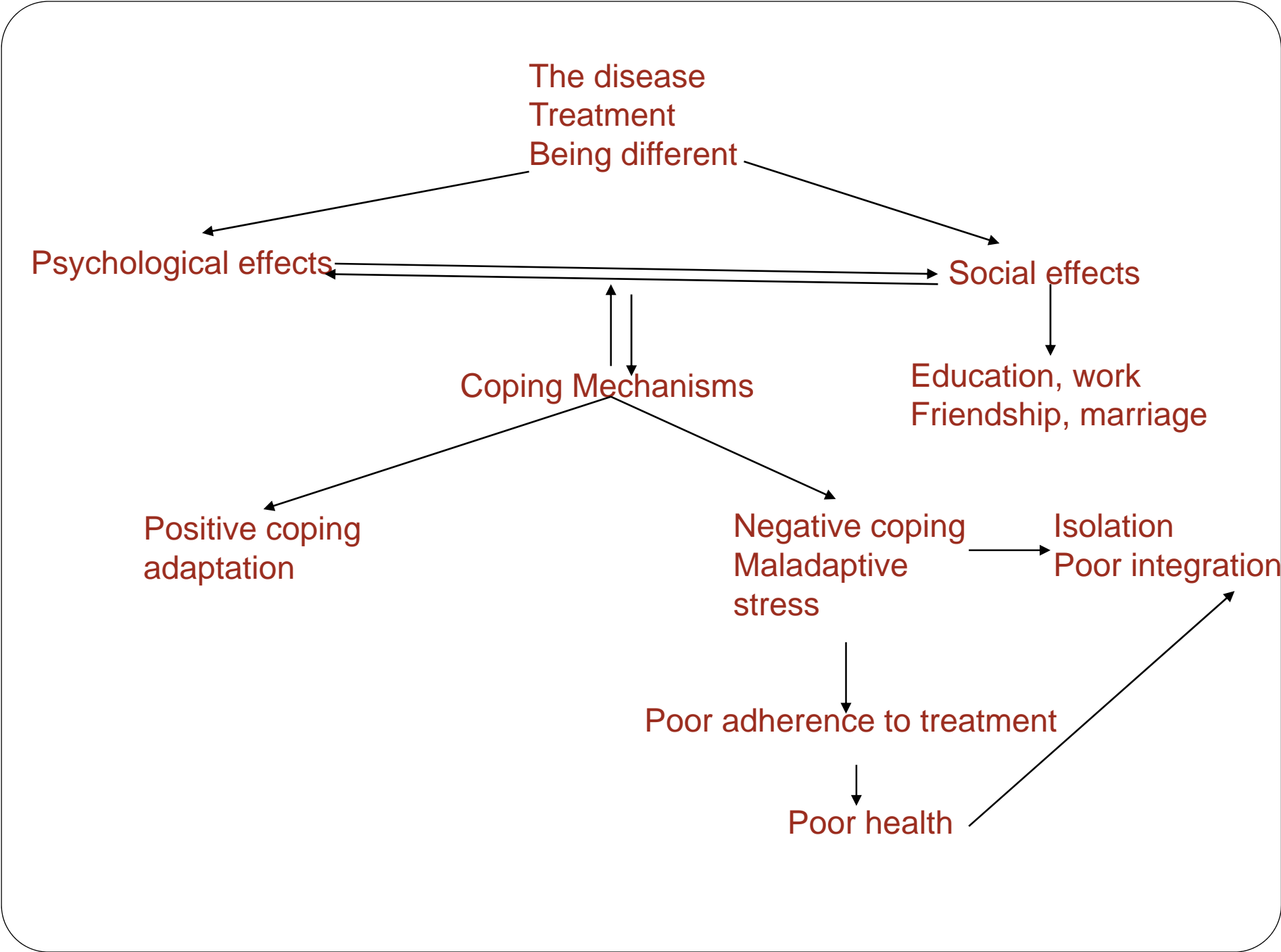
- Being viewed as different
- Being bullied
- Social prejudice
- Social isolation
- Poor self esteem

Employment

- Poor health
- Loss of workdays
- Poor qualifications
- Employers fears
- Unemployment
- Loss of earnings
- Loss of the chance to have a job and be independent
- Poor self esteem

Marriage/family

- Endocrine failure
- Reduced sexual confidence
- Feeling left out
- Feeling different
- Failed relationships
- Divorces
- Social isolation
- Poor self esteem



What is needed?

Final result is an interplay of many factors

- Family support from childhood through adolescence
- A good doctor/patient relationship
- Confidence in the service
- Peer relationships: not being treated as 'different' especially in adolescence leaves a strong imprint in the adult view of social image and adaptation
- Professional support where needed

