

Negative thinking can make you ill

Negative thoughts can increase your chances of becoming sick, according to scientists.



Negative expectations can produce harmful effects, say scientists Photo: GETTY

By Ben Leach

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Reading the side-effects on a bottle of tablets can increase your chances of having them while thinking you will die during surgery makes you more likely to do so, research has shown.



MIND says it is becoming increasingly important to get men to open up as the worries about jobs are pushing many of them to suicidal thoughts

"The idea that believing you are ill can make you ill sounds far-fetched, yet rigorous trials have established beyond a doubt that the converse is true - the power of suggestion can improve health," reported New Scientist magazine.

"The placebo effect has an evil twin: the nocebo effect, in which dummy pills and negative expectations can produce harmful effects."

For example in clinical trials for new drugs a quarter of patients given placebos experienced the side-effects associated with the real thing.

In trials for blood pressure-lowering beta blockers, tiredness and loss of libido were just as common in those given dummy versions.

Dr Clifton Meador, of Vanderbilt School of Medicine in Nashville in the U.S, said negative thinking can become self-fulfilling.

"Bad news promotes bad physiology. I think that you can persuade people that they're going to die and have it happen. I don't think there is anything mystical about it."

"We're uncomfortable with the idea that words or symbolic actions can cause death because it changes our biomolecular model of the world."

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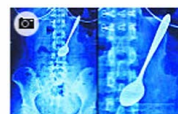
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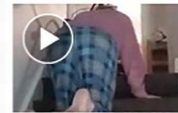
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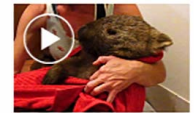
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