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FATIGUE

Doc: Illness needs a name change

A study led by DePaul University psychology professor Leonard Jason suggests that chronic fatigue syndrome would be taken more seriously by physicians if it were given a new name.

Jason's researchers asked groups of medical students and hospital residents to review case studies of CFS patients and assess whether their condition was likely to improve within two years.

Only 16 percent of them thought that kind of improvement was likely when the condition was given the medically based name, myalgic encephalopathy. But more than 40 percent predicted improvement when told the symptoms were those of chronic fatigue syndrome.

Jason contends the study indicates that the name alone influences physicians and that with a "medical" name, CFS would be considered more worthy of support services and government-funded research.