

## Writing: **NEWS ARTICLE**

### **PREFACE**

I produced some logos out of my initials for my Document Design and Production class in my senior year. The following logos show my aesthetic and personalities.

# The Dangers of Optimism

Optimistic adults underestimate their doctor's health recommendations and face negative impacts such as weight gain and disease, according to a recent study by the British Journal of Health Psychology.

The study shows how optimism can disengage people from maintaining their health and thereby, worsen their health condition.

Excessively optimistic individuals believe they are more likely than the average person to encounter positive experiences, such as landing their dream job. They also believe they are less likely than the average person to encounter negative experiences, such as suffer from a terminal illness.

Over 400 participants, with the average age of 70 years, were evaluated in an in-person survey.

They were asked to predict the likelihood of their current physical and psychological health, level of stress, and perceived health increasing or decreasing within two years. Participants ranked these conditions on a scale of 0-10, with 5 being the neutral or "no change" state.

After the survey, a physician intervened to recommend ways to maintain or improve the participants' health, such as exercising and eating a balanced meal.

Participants were interviewed again two years later and were asked to recall the doctor's advice, as well as reflect on their current lifestyle.

Results indicated over half of the participants' health declined from underestimating the physician's recommendations. The positive mentality of optimistic participants reduced the incentive to practice healthy behaviors, as they believed they were healthier than they actually were.

Consequently, some began to gain weight. Others increased their frequency in smoking, which increased their risk of heart disease and lung cancer.

The study also reported that excessively optimistic participants expected their health to remain unchanged and even improved because participants were already practicing cautionary behavior two years prior to the second interview. Most of them already had low blood pressure, were physically active, maintained a healthy weight, and decreased their frequency of smoking at the time.

Previous research suggests the health benefits of optimism. However, this study forewarns how too much optimism may do more harm than good, as counterproductive and even harmful habits may arise.