

Candace Pert

“There is a mind in the body and a body in the mind.”

In looking at the issue of the mind-body connection and when assessing the question about whether emotions are stored in body, I'd like to summarize from Candace Pert's book 'Molecules of Emotion: The Science Behind Mind'.

She discusses how neuropeptides are the biochemical basis for emotion. All emotions seem to have their own peptide, which generates multiple levels of responses (on emotional & physical levels). The old model had emotions residing in limbic brain, the new model suggests that only 2% are in limbic brain, 98% are in neuropeptides which flow throughout the body.

Neuropeptides communicate among the nervous, immune, endocrine, muscle, and skeletal systems via blood, interstitial fluids, and the central nervous system, which are all body fluids. Neuropeptides bind to cell receptors. Conclusion: That neuropeptides are the key to how emotions are stored in the body.

In Damasio's book, 'The Feeling of What Happens: Body & Emotion in the Making of Consciousness', he concludes that both emotions & memories are facilitated by neuropeptides binding to cells. A memory is not stored unless it has an emotional content. Pain is also transmitted via neuropeptides. Consciousness itself is not possible without emotions; meaning that the body is the unconscious mind. Dreams may originate in body, communicate state of body to mind. Conclusion: Memories, Emotions, and Pain pathways are all facilitated using the same mechanism in the body.

How emotions affect health-

- Immune system can be conditioned (in Pavlov's sense).
- Cells of immune, endocrine & nervous system have receptors for molecules of emotion.
- Every neuropeptide receptor in brain also on surface of monocytes elsewhere in body.
- Any neuropeptide created in brain will attach to monocytes.
- Hence a link between emotion & disease.

Example: Rheovirus, which causes common cold, uses receptors for norepinephrine. If an individual is happy, these receptors are filled with norepinephrine so happy person is less likely to get a cold.

And a Pharmaceutical induced example...The antipsychotic drugs Haldol, Thorazine, Risperdal, Clozaril block receptors dopamine; this can cause GI & immune side effects; it releases prolactin in women which causes constant PMS. Comment: What a choice - psychosis or (PMS-related) psychosis

Bibliography

Pert, Candace B, (1997) 'Molecules of Emotion: The Science Behind Mind-Body Medicine', Simon & Schuster (Thanks, Vickie, for recommending. This book pretty much answered the question, from a physiological point of view. I highly recommend it; and it's a lot more entertaining than my summary below would have you believe.)

Damasio, Antonio, (1999) 'The Feeling of What Happens: Body & Emotion in the Making of Consciousness', Harcourt

Upledger, John E, (1990) 'SomatoEmotional Release and Beyond', UI Publishing Inc, and (2003) Cell Talk, North Atlantic Books (Talks about trauma & emotions stored in energy cysts-a term coined by Elmer Green)

Dychtwald, Ken, (1986) 'Bodymind', Putnam (Associates emotions with posture & parts of the body)