

**Current issues on social support and their relationships with health: a review (pp. 5-38)**

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This thorough review of the controversial issue of social support begins with a brief history of its development as a concept. Through the discussion of different definitions of social support, this article traces the conceptual evolution and increasing complexity of the subject across time. The study goes on to classify different ideas about social support, talking into account both structure and function, including the possibility of social support as a metaconstruct. Different approaches stemming from varying conceptualizations and theoretical perspectives, as well as some relevant examples, have been discussed. All these aspects are addressed as a part of an attempts to explain the mechanisms through which social support affects individuals, accounting for both its negative and positive effects. Lastly, the relationship between social support and physical and psychological health is also explored, detailing once again both positive and negative consequences. Possible cause and effect mechanisms through which social factors can influence illnesses are examined. Specifically, how the use of support can be a tool in behavioral modification and/or habit maintenance (both good and bad), therefore influencing the individual's health.