Understanding the Positive Implications of the Placebo Effect

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Greater mitigating effect on ghrelin (hunger inducing and metabolic regulating hormone)

(Crum, Corbin, Brownell & Salovey, 2013, Health Psychology)
Improvement

Treatment

Placebo

Drug Effect

Irrelevant

Placebo Effect

Crum, Leibowitz & Verghese, 2017, BMJ
Crum, Leibowitz & Verghese, 2017, BMJ
This is an antihistamine cream. It will make your rash and irritation better.
This is a histamine agonist. It will make your rash and irritation worse.

Placebo cream
Negative Expectation

Positive Expectation

Size of allergic reaction (mm)

Cream will make rash worse.

Cream will make rash better.

(Howe, Goyer, & Crum, 2017, Health Psych)
High Warmth

High Competence

Low Warmth

Low Competence

Oops…
Negative Expectation

Positive Expectation

Size of allergic reaction (mm)

Cream will make rash better.

(Howe, Goyer, & Crum, 2017, Health Psych)
Low Warmth

Low Competence

Cream will make rash better.

(Howe, Goyer, & Crum, 2017, Health Psych)
Crum, Leibowitz & Verghese, 2017, BMJ

Body's Natural Abilities

Placebo Effect

Drug Effect

Treatment Effect

% Improvement
Body's Natural Abilities

Mindset

Improvement

Treatment Effect

Drug Effect

Placebo Effect

Crum, Leibowitz & Verghese, 2017, BMJ
Mindset
Body's Natural Abilities
Mindset
Social Context

Treatment Effect

Drug Effect
Placebo Effect

Crum, Leibowitz & Verghese, 2017, BMJ
Treatment Effect

Drug Effect

Body's Natural Abilities
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Crum, Leibowitz & Verghese, 2017, BMJ