

## **Adjustment to severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS): Roles of appraisal and post-traumatic growth**

SAMMY K. W. CHENG, GEORGE H. C. CHONG,  
SONIA S. Y. CHANG, CHEE WING WONG,  
CONNIE S. Y. WONG, MIKE T. P. WONG, &  
KIT CHING WONG

*Clinical Psychology Service Unit, Kwai Chung Hospital, Hong Kong, China*

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### **Abstract**

Being infected with Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) can be a traumatic experience. Recent findings indicate that SARS survivors tend to report prominent distress after short-term recovery. This study aimed to examine the roles of appraisal and post-traumatic growth in explaining adjustment outcomes in SARS survivors. Fifty-seven Hong Kong Chinese SARS survivors completed self-administered questionnaires that assessed anxiety and depression symptoms, perceived health, appraisal, and post-traumatic growth. Results of regression analyses showed that factors of appraisal ('perceived impact' and 'coping efficacy') and of post-traumatic growth ('personal growth' and 'relationship growth') respectively accounted for a significant portion of variance in all of the outcome measures, after the effects of demographic and clinical features were controlled. Path analyses revealed that 'perceived impact' and 'coping efficacy' had direct and indirect effects on all outcome variables, whereas 'personal growth' only had a direct effect on depression. Appraisal and post-traumatic growth might be important constructs in accounting for differential outcomes in SARS survivors. Treatment implications and limitations of the study are discussed.

**Keywords:** *Adjustment, SARS, appraisal, post-traumatic growth*

### **SARS and adjustment**

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) has had a worldwide impact with 29 countries affected and over 8400 cases reported in 2003 (SARS Expert Committee, 2003). Being infected with SARS can be a traumatic experience.

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Correspondence: Dr. Sammy K. W. Cheng, Clinical Psychology Service Unit, Kwai Chung Hospital, Hong Kong, China. E-mail: sammykcheng@cuhk.edu.hk