

Nancy Adler

April 23, 2013



University of California, San Francisco

James McKeen Cattell Fellow Award

Nancy Adler has been a pioneer in health psychology, having co-edited the first textbook on that topic and run one of the first graduate programs in health psychology at the University of California, San Francisco. She has also led, for more than 20 years, a postdoctoral program in health psychology funded by the National Institutes of Health.

Adler has investigated why individuals engage in health-damaging behaviors and how their understanding of risk affects their choices. This research has primarily been in reproductive health, examining adolescent decision making regarding contraception, conscious and preconscious motivation for pregnancy, perceptions of risk of sexually transmitted diseases, and the use of reproductive technologies for infertility. She has also studied the impact of socioeconomic status on health. As chair of the MacArthur Research Network on Socioeconomic Status (SES) and Health, she has been investigating how social, psychological, and biological factors associated with SES act together to determine the onset and progression of disease.

She is also examining how the relationship of SES and health may differ depending on gender and ethnicity. Under her leadership, the network raised the study of health disparities all over the globe to a new level of sophistication. Adler is known to her colleagues as someone who always has a smile, sound advice, and a generous heart. She is most often seen mentoring junior colleagues and students.