Symposium: Mechanisms Underlying the Remission of Chronic Stress-Related Disorders

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There is now a large body of controlled empirical evidence demonstrating that psychophysiological therapy (e.g., biofeedback, autogenic training) can be associated with clinically significant long-term remission of several chronic stress-related symptoms (e.g., muscular and vascular headache). But there has been little or no pre/post investigation of changes in the hypothesized mechanisms underlying these symptoms. Logical and empirical analyses of the mechanisms underlying somatic symptoms could lead to more direct, rational, and parsimonious interventions and the avoidance of phenomena like symptom substitution. This symposium will focus on these underlying mechanisms. The symposium is relevant to the integration theme of this meeting because it focuses on the fact that the field of clinical psychophysiology (e.g., biofeedback) is secure enough so that it is now prepared to examine scientific issues other than "control and prediction" of clinical symptoms. The field is secure and mature enough to approach the scientific issue of "explanation": or "why" do symptoms remit. This type of symposium can move the focus toward an integration of logical and empirical analyses of not merely the "facts" but now the mechanism of change in psychophysiology and self-regulation.

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