

## Dr Anna Phillips

Dr Anna Phillips of the School of Sport and Exercise Sciences describes, in 60 seconds, her research into how stress and depression affects the immune system.

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I'm Dr Anna Phillips, I'm a Health Psychologist at the University of Birmingham, working in the School of Sport and Exercise Sciences.

My research falls into two main areas. The first is looking at psychological factors like stress and depression and how they affect the immune system and this is really relevant to the ageing population because what we're finding, for example, is that older people who have had a bereavement or who develop depression after a hip fracture actually go on to have worse immune function and this means that they are more likely to catch infections.

The other area my research is looking more at short-term stress and we study physiological responses to this in the laboratory. And what we know from this is that people who have very large or exaggerated responses to stress go on to develop heart disease later in life.

What we're now finding is that those people who don't respond at all physically to stress either also have negative health outcomes. So these are things like depression, or obesity or a range of addictions. So this is interesting because it also tells us how well people are going to age and how healthy they'll be.

**[Dr Anna Phillips' profile \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/sport-exercise/staff/profile.aspx?Referenceld=5453&Name=dr-anna-phillips\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/sport-exercise/staff/profile.aspx?Referenceld=5453&Name=dr-anna-phillips)**

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