



Covadonga Chaves recently completed a master's degree in Clinical and Health Psychology at Complutense University of Madrid in 2009 and is currently a PhD student at the Complutense University of Madrid (supervised by Dr. Carmelo Vázquez). Her research interests focus on three areas with potential clinical applications: (1) the study of factors involved in the optimal development of the people and their well-being, (2) in growth experiences through adversity and (3) in the connection between positive emotions and the important life outcomes of interpersonal relationships and health. We asked Covadonga a few questions about her research and current activities:

**1. Why did you originally begin researching this topic, and why do you think it's an important topic for the workshop you developed?**

We, psychologists, have typically operated within a disease model and have therefore spent time researching everything that could go wrong in regard to human behavior. This means that we have spent little time defining positive human traits such as happiness or kindness. These limitations boosted my interest in how positive emotions could affect people's thinking patterns, social behavior, and health. At my clinical practice, I saw that inducing positive emotions or encouraging the use of strengths was beneficial for people instead of focusing my attention on client weaknesses. Therefore, my ultimate goal is to understand how positive emotions might transform people's lives for the better.

**2. How can the information and lessons you've learned from your research be applied to society/individuals in general?**

I am conducting a study in a sample of hospitalized children with life-threatening illnesses, funded by a Spanish Foundation similar to the United States' program 'Make a Wish'. The aim of the

Foundation is the fulfillment of a special wish, which provides kids a sense of future and, of course, wonderful moments of pleasure however transitory. A wish experience is frequently a source of inspiration for children undergoing difficult medical treatments and a positive force that helps them overcome their obstacles. More specifically, within this study I am analyzing the actual positive effects in terms of emotions, life satisfaction, psychological growth and personal strengths.

Results from my research show that positive emotions can be found within a complex of negative emotions. Positive and negative emotional styles are independent and both appear through situations of adversity. Traditionally, it was thought that people in adversity showed negative emotions. However, we saw that, in these kids, positive emotions are more common than negative ones. This fact has several implications. It is broadly known that a positive emotional style may play an important role in health and interpersonal relationships. Thus, a positive emotional style could be one pathway to resilience in this population. The fulfillment of a wish is a way of recapturing a healthier and happier state of mind. Additional constructs from the domain of positive psychology should be reviewed as a framework for guiding future research in this area.

SIPPA would like to congratulate Covadonga for the great and innovative work she is doing. We also extend our thanks to Jason Van Allen, M.A. for writing this article.



SIPPA is accepting nominations for outstanding students in Positive Psychology. Students will be selected to be interviewed and written about in upcoming issues of IPPA's e-newsletter based on their commitment to positive psychology and contributions to the scientific advancement of our field. This is a great opportunity to honor talented students and encourage them to become more engaged in IPPA/SIPPA. Please email the following information to [sippanetwork@gmail.com](mailto:sippanetwork@gmail.com) if you would like to nominate a student:

1. Name, title, and affiliation of advisor/mentor
2. Name, title, and email address of nominee
3. A letter from the advisor/mentor describing the nominee's contributions to the field (Please no more than one page).
4. A copy of the nominee's current CV