

# How emotional intelligence and emotional skills are linked with well-being, health, work ability and recovery?

Taina Hintsa<sup>1</sup> and Aleksis Aronen<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Educational Sciences and Psychology, University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu, Finland

## Background

Emotional intelligence (EI) has been associated with better health. Stress is a risk factor for a variety of health problems. Previously it has been suggested that EI may work as a stress buffer. A recent systematic review has concluded that EI relates to faster recovery from stress. We expanded this line of research by examining the links of EI and emotional skills (ES) with subjective well-being, self-rated health, work ability and recovery from work, and potential gender differences.

## Aims

We examined the relationship of EI and emotional skills (ES) such as appraisal of own or others' emotions, regulation of own emotions as well as emotions of others and utilization of emotions with subjective well-being, self-rated health, work ability and recovery from work, and potential gender differences.

## Materials and Methods

There were 50 (21 women) participants of the cross-sectional study. EI was measured by BEIS-10 (its dimensions as ES), and emotions with a short version of PANAS. Recovery experiences (psychological detachment from work, relaxation, mastery and control) was measured with Recovery Experiences Questionnaire. We analyzed the data with correlation analysis.

## Results

In the whole sample, total EI was related to higher mastery recovery experiences ( $r_s=0.32$ ,  $p<.05$ ), positive emotions ( $r_s=0.37$ ,  $p<.05$ ), and marginally with self-rated health ( $r_s=0.28$ ,  $p<.10$ ).

Of the emotional skills, appraisal and regulation of own emotions were related to higher subjective well-being. Appraisal of own emotions and emotions of other were related to higher recovery experiences in total. Appraisal of others' emotions was linked to higher work ability.

Positive emotions were linked to lower experienced stress, higher subjective well-being, higher recovery experiences and better work ability. Negative emotions were linked to higher experienced stress, lower subjective well-being, lower recovery experiences and poorer work ability.

## Gender-specific relationships

In women, EI was linked to mastery ( $r_s=0.52$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and control ( $r_s=0.59$ ,  $p<.01$ ) recovery experiences, and better self-rated health ( $r_s=0.44$ ,  $p<.05$ ) (Figure 1).

Of the ES, appraisal of others' emotions were linked to mastery recovery experiences and control of free time. Regulation of others' emotions was linked to better self-rated health.

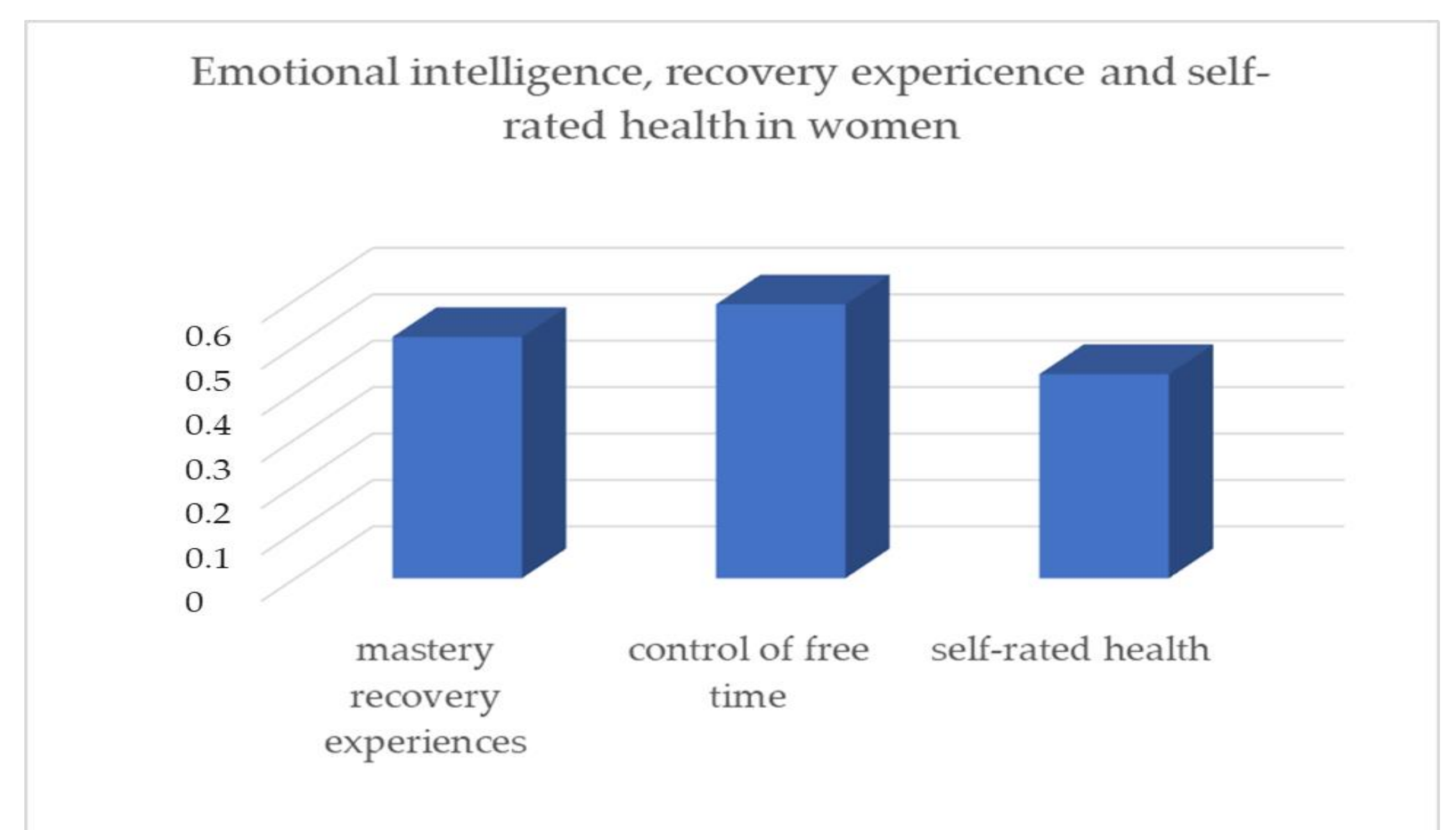


Figure 1. The bivariate associations between emotional intelligence, recovery experiences and self-rated health in women.

In men, appraisal of own emotions was linked to better SWB higher total recovery, and higher detachment from work. Positive emotions were linked to better self-rated health and work ability whereas negative emotions to poorer recovery.

## Discussion

EI, ES and positive emotions seems to relate to better well-being and may help in finding adaptive responses when encountering stress.

We report some potential gender differences in these relationships. In women, the role of appraisal and regulation of others' emotions seem to be linked to better self-rated health and better recovery. In men, appraisal of own emotions seems to relate to better well-being and recovery whereas regulation of others' emotions seems to be linked to poorer recovery.

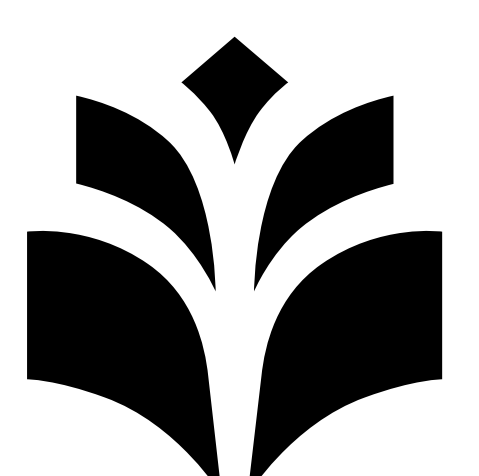
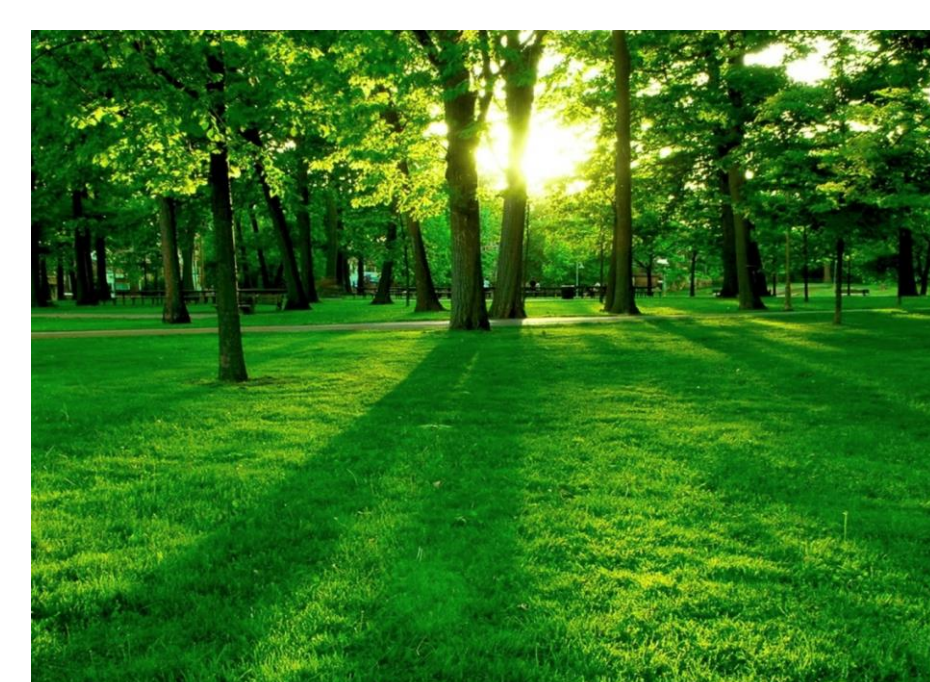
This preliminary information may be useful in development of programs aimed at enhancing well-being.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Taina Hintsa  
Department of Educational Sciences  
and Psychology  
University of Eastern Finland

## MORE INFORMATION

[taina.hintsa@uef.fi](mailto:taina.hintsa@uef.fi)



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