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An Evaluation of The Relationship Between

STRESSFUL LIFE EVENTS, SOCIAL SUPPORT

And

DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS

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A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of
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ABSTRACT

A replication of Bell, Le Roy and Stephenson's (1982) study in New Zealand Rural, Country Town and City living conditions found no significant differences between the three communities in overall measurements of Stressful Life Events, Social Support and Depressive Symptoms. There were significant differences, however, within the communities. Sociodemographic groups within both Rural and City communities shared similarities that were conspicuously absent in Country Town living where significant differences were shown for Race, Sex, Age, and Socioeconomic Status.

With the same levels of Social Support, New Zealand numbers of Stressful Events and Depressive Symptoms were significantly higher than in the United States study.

The best model for explaining the findings in terms of this study, is that Stressful Events have a direct negative effect on Depressive Symptoms and that Social Support has a weak beneficial direct effect at intermediate levels of support. There was a tendency for Depressive Symptoms to increase at both low and high levels of support.

While the number of depressive symptoms increased with increasing numbers of stressful events there was no evidence that this was a contingent relationship with the level of Social Support or that the effect was other than of the additive variety. The New Zealand study did not confirm the Bell et al. (1982) conditional effect finding but as in the Bell et al. study, there was no evidence of interactive effects.

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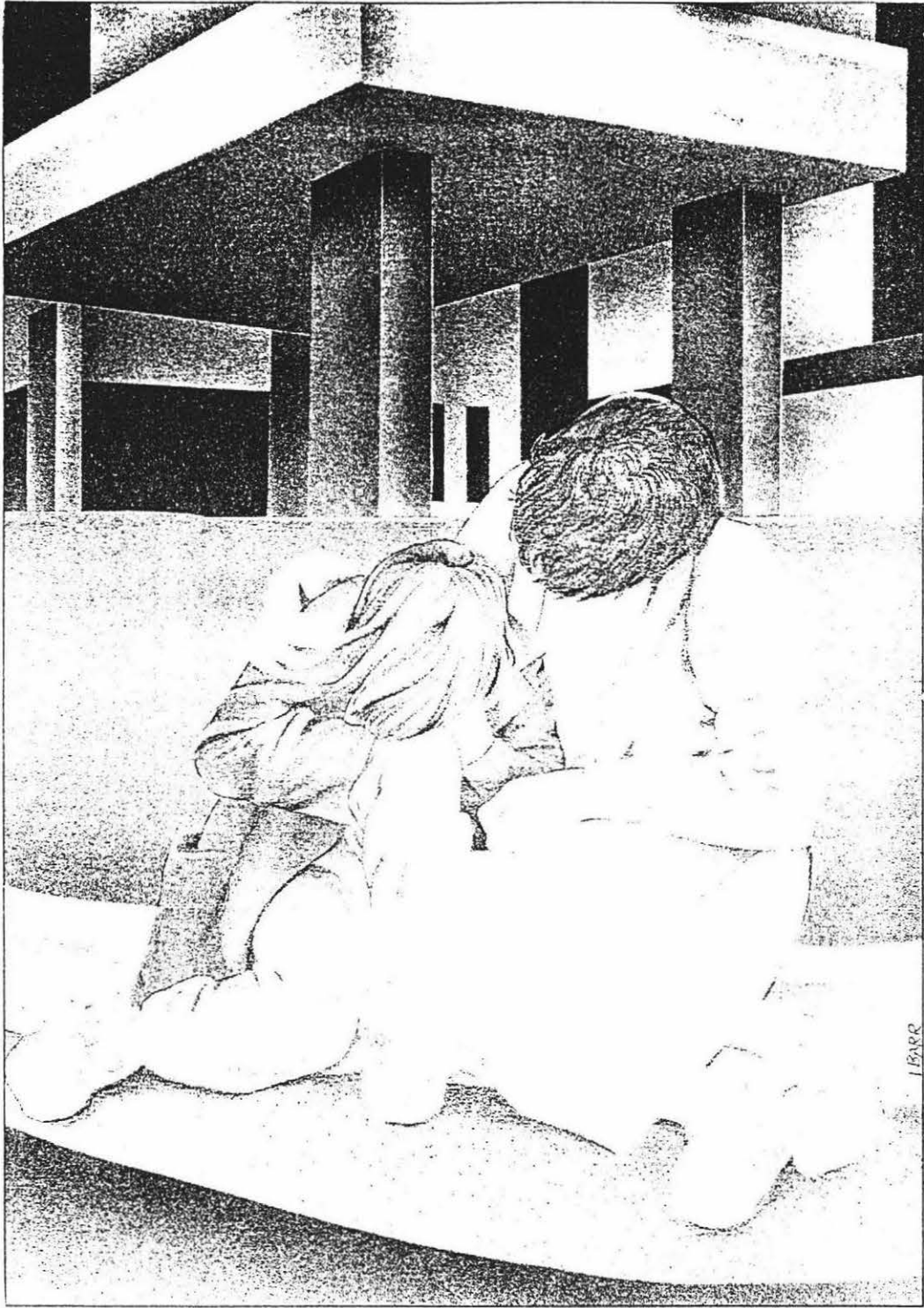
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