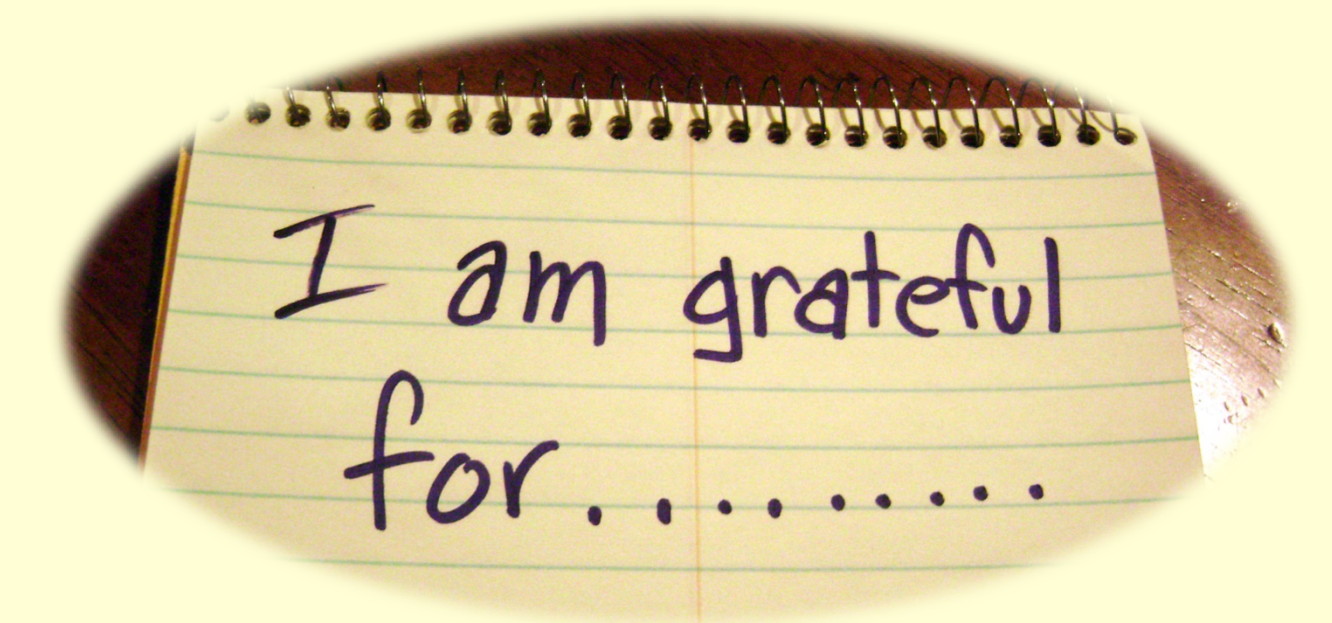




The Role of Gratitude in Wellbeing in Asymptomatic Heart Failure Patients

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Introduction

- In symptomatic heart failure (HF), spirituality is associated with better mental health as well as better HF-related physical functioning.
- Gratitude is considered a positive psychological factor that has also been associated with wellbeing in some populations.
- Gratitude is part of a wider life orientation towards noticing and appreciating the positive aspects of life, and its practice offers a possible modifiable mechanism by which spirituality may exert its beneficial effects on physical and mental health.
- Few if any studies have examined whether gratitude is associated with better wellbeing in HF, or whether it is a mechanism through which spirituality may exert its benefit on health.

Purpose

- To examine associations among gratitude, spiritual wellbeing, sleep quality, depressed mood, fatigue, inflammation and self-efficacy to maintain cardiac function.

Setting & Patients

- 186 men and women with American College of Cardiology / American Heart Association Stage B asymptomatic HF (age 66.5 years $\pm$ 10) were recruited from the UC San Diego and VA San Diego Healthcare System.

Assessments

- Gratitude (GQ-6)
- Spiritual wellbeing (FACIT-sp)
- Mood (BDI)
- Sleep quality (PSQI)
- Fatigue (MFSI-sf)
- Self-efficacy to maintain cardiac function (CSEQ-mf)
- Inflammatory biomarkers relevant to cardiovascular disease (CRP, TNF-alpha, IL-6, IFN-gamma & ST2)

Results

- In correlational analyses, gratitude was associated with:
 - Better sleep ($r=-.254$, $p<0.01$)
 - Less depressed mood ($r=-0.405$, $p<0.01$)
 - Less fatigue ($r=-.455$, $p<0.01$)
 - Better self-efficacy to maintain cardiac function ($r=.406$, $p<0.01$)
 - Lower levels of an inflammatory biomarker index ($r=-.166$, $p<0.05$)

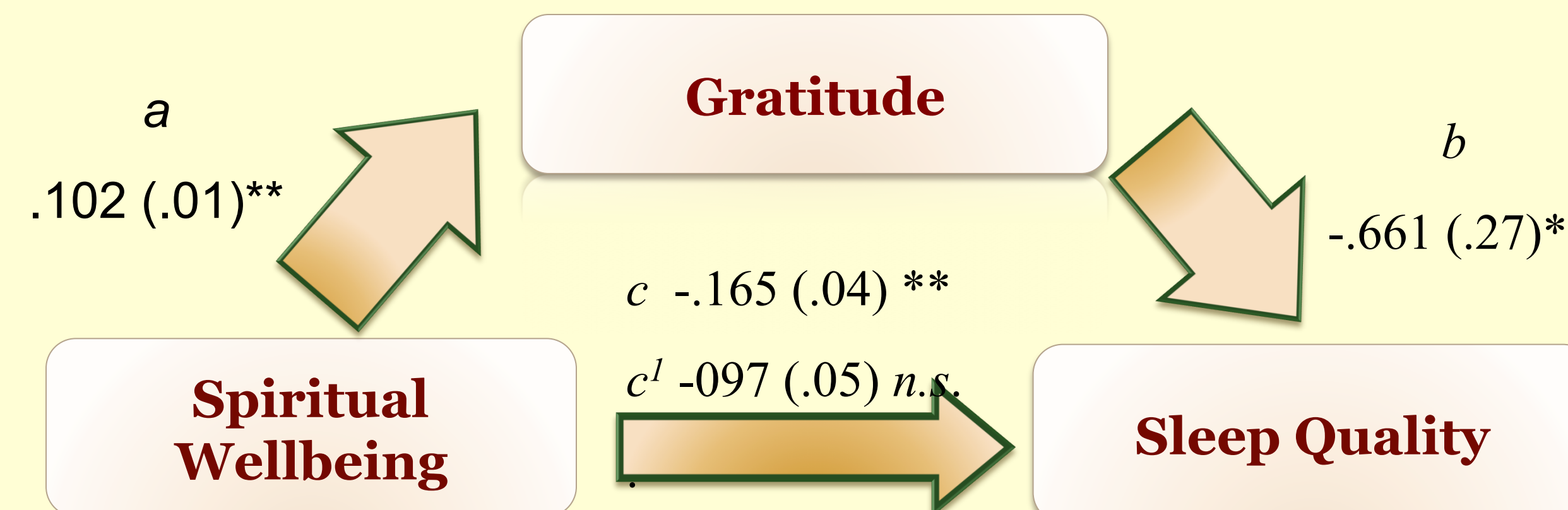


Figure 1. Gratitude significantly mediated the relationship between spiritual wellbeing and sleep quality ($z=-2.35$, $SE=.03$, $p=.02$). Path values are B (SE). ** $p<.001$, * $p<.05$

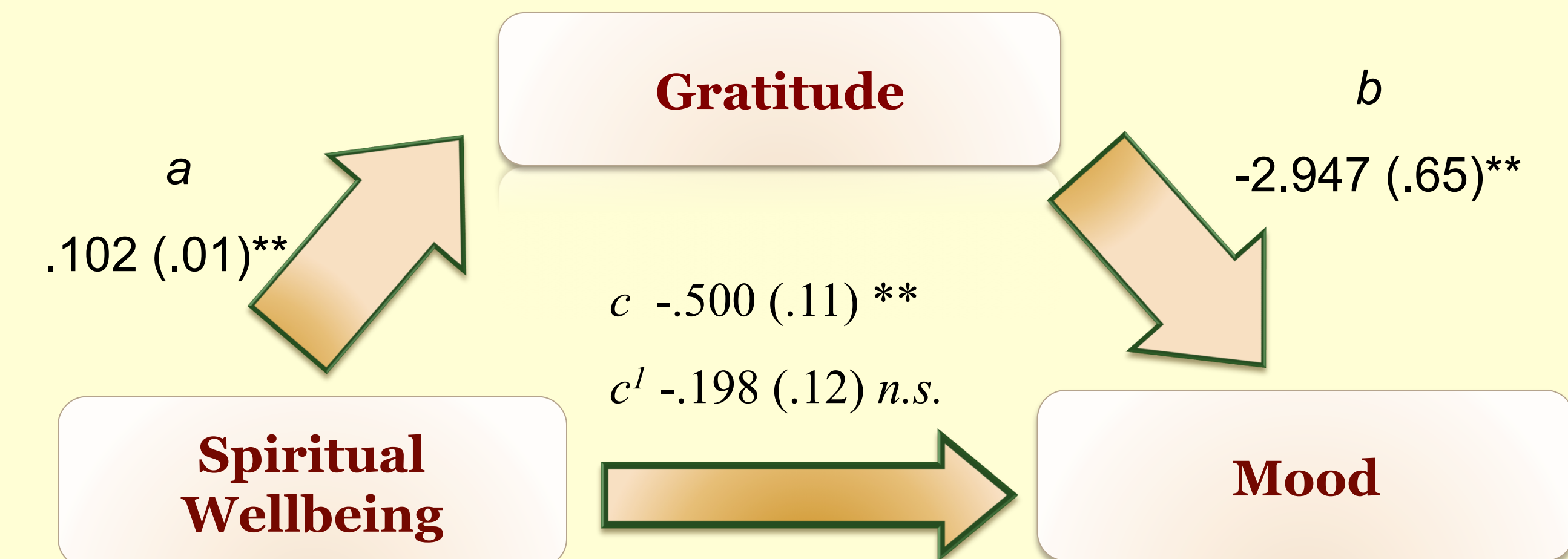


Figure 2. Gratitude significantly mediated the relationship between spiritual wellbeing and mood ($z=-4.00$, $SE=.08$, $p<.001$). Path values are B (SE). ** $p<.001$, * $p<.05$

Conclusions

- Gratitude and spiritual wellbeing are key positive factors to consider in this population. We showed that a mental attitude such as gratitude is related to better mood and sleep, more self-efficacy, and a lower cellular inflammatory index.
- Further, we attempted to untangle these relationships and found that spiritual wellbeing's relationship with better sleep and less depressed mood is through higher trait gratitude.
- Efforts to increase gratitude in HF patients' lives may be a treatment target for improving wellbeing and be of potential clinical value.