

SHORT COMMUNICATION

Stress and Its Management

Rajendra Kumar ¹, Neetika Bhardwaj ², Nidhi ³

1- Assistant Professor, Department of Community Medicine, Gold Field Institute of Medical Sciences & Research, Chhainsa, Ballabgarh, Faridabad, Haryana, India

2,3- Post-Graduate Student, Department of Conservative Dentistry and Endodontics, Divya Jyoti College of Dental Science & Research, Modinagar, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, India

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Abstract

Stress is a fact of everyday life, we've all felt it. Sometimes it acts as a positive force and sometimes as a negative force. If you experience stress over a prolonged period of time, it could become chronic, till you take some action. About 500 million people worldwide are believed to be suffering from neurotic, stress related and psychological problems. The challenge can, however, be tackled by joint action between life sciences, social sciences, urban planning, architecture and politics. This article highlights the causes, effects and management of stress and therefore could be helpful for people who want to learn how to react to stress in a more constructive, proactive way.

Key words: Architecture, Neurotic problems, Psychological problems, Stress

Address for correspondence: Col(Dr) Rajendra Kumar, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Community Medicine, Gold Field Institute of Medical Sciences & Research, Chhainsa, Ballabgarh, Faridabad, Haryana, India Email: rajendrak5462@gmail.com, neetika.0111@gmail.com, Mob: 9990722085

Introduction

Mental health is an important component of the total positive health and is interwoven closely with the physical and physiological dynamics of the human body. Worldwide, about 500 million people are believed to be suffering from neurotic, stress related and psychological problems ^[1]. Although stress is unavoidable but it should not be over looked as even short-lived, minor stress can have an impact. Stress becomes dangerous when it starts interfering with your ability to live a normal life. The longer the stress lasts, the worse it is for both your mind and body ^[2].

According to the WHO expert committee mental health can be defined as 'the capacity in an individual to form harmonious relations with others and to participate in or contribute constructively to change in the social environment' ^[3]. One of the World Health Organization report on mental health states 'Mental disorders occur in persons of all genders, ages, and backgrounds. No group is immune to mental disorders, but the risk is

higher among the poor, homeless, the unemployed, persons with low education' ^[4].

India, is also not left unaffected, due to change in the life style the number of person suffering from stress is increasing every day especially in cities, one of the surveys on mental morbidity in various parts of the country suggest a prevalence rate of 18-20 per 1000 ^[1]. A substantial number of Indian suffer from Common Mental Disorders (CMD) which are characterized by symptoms such as fatigue, forgetfulness, insomnia, irritability, difficulty in concentrating, headaches, and psychosomatic complaints ^[5]. Although in small quantities, stress is good; it can motivate you and help you become more productive. However, too much stress, or a strong response to stress can be harmful ^[6].

Cause of Stress

Stress can be experienced from four basic sources.

1. **Social Stressors:** Some examples of social stressors include deadlines, financial problems, job interviews, presentations, disagreements, demands for your time and

attention, loss of a loved one, divorce and co-parenting.

2. **Environmental Stressor:** It includes weather, noise, crowding, pollution, traffic, and crime.
3. **Physiological:** Examples of physiological stressors include illness, aging, giving birth, accidents, lack of exercise, poor nutrition and sleep disturbances.

Stress Management

Every person has a unique response to stress, so there is no one fixed solution to managing it. No single method works for everyone or in every situation, so experiment with different techniques and strategies and focus on what makes you feel calm and in control.

There are two basic ways of managing stress.

1. Change the situation:

- Avoid the stressor
- Alter the stressor

2. Change your reaction:

- Adapt to the stressor
- Accept the stressor^[5]

By reducing your stress levels, you will feel better and also it may protect your health longterm. In one study, researchers examined the association between “positive affect” — feelings like happiness, joy, contentment and enthusiasm — and the development of coronary heart disease over a decade. They concluded that for every one-point increase in positive affect on a five-point scale, the rate of heart disease dropped by 22 percent^[6].

How to Reduce Stress

Some methods for reducing stress include---

- A. **Identify:** Keep a check on your state of mind throughout the day. Whenever you feel stressed, write down the cause, your thoughts and your mood. Once you identify what is bothering you, develop a plan for addressing it.
- B. **Build strong relationships:** Relationships can be a source of stress. Research has found that negative, hostile reactions with your spouse cause immediate changes in stress-sensitive hormones, for example. But relationships can also serve as stress buffers. Reach out to family members or close friends and let them know you're having a tough time. They may be able to offer

practical assistance and support, useful ideas or just a fresh perspective as you begin to tackle whatever is causing your stress.

- C. **Exercise/Physical Activities:** Before you react, take time, try to recollect your-self and reconsider. Walking or other physical activities can also help. Plus, exercise increases the production of endorphins, your body's natural mood-booster. Commit to a daily walk or other form of exercise — a small step that can make a big difference in reducing stress levels. Research shows that activities like yoga and relaxation exercises not only help reduce stress, but also boost immune functioning.
- D. **Get help:** If all of this not helping, consult with a psychologist or other licensed mental health professional who can help you learn how to manage stress effectively. He or she can help you identify situations or behaviors that contribute to your chronic stress and then develop an action plan for changing them^[6].

Other ways may be:

- Get a massage.
- Curl up with a good book
- Listen to music
- Watch a comedy
- Spend time in nature
- Take a long bath
- Light scented candles
- Savor a warm cup of coffee or tea.
- Play with a pet^[6].

Conclusion

Stress is a normal part of life and therefore unavoidable. But, every effort should be done to reduce it. Reducing your stress levels can not only make you feel better right now, but may also protect your health long-term. The World Health Organization has highlighted stress as one of the major health challenges of the twenty first century. Urban living is quickly developing as a major contributor to this. By understanding ourselves and our reaction to stress-provoking situations, we can learn to handle stress more effectively.

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