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Stress: A Potential Threat on Physical and Social Well-Being

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ABSTRACT

Stress has become one of the biggest challenges of the world. Everyone feel stressed from time to time. Some people, thought, say that they feel much stressed most of the time while stress is not always bad, but too much stress can be detrimental. Emotional stress that stays around for weeks or months can weaken the immune system and cause high blood pressure, fatigue, depression, anxiety and heart disease. Stress occurs when we are presented with a real or perceived threat or harmful situation. It is our body response to danger and is something we can experience physically, mentally and emotionally. In this article explain how stress could be affecting our well being.

All of us keep hearing this terminology stress most commonly. Somebody gets stress physically, somebody gets stress emotionally, somebody gets stress mentally and express that is high stressful. It is very commonly occurring phenomenon in every one's life. Let us try to understand what exactly stress is all about. In simple terms stress can be defined as "Non specific basic response pattern which prepares an individual for demanding situation". This involves activities at physiological level, activities at behavior level and emotional level. Stress arises when individuals perceive that can adequately cope with demands being made on them or with threats made to their well being. Continued exposure to stress result in a decline in the body's overall functioning because of continues secretion of stress related hormones. Stress affect our immune system due to which, our task performance suffers badly. Apart from physiological impact of stress, one suffers from psychological as well as emotional.

While stress can be a positive process such as when it motivates us to complete a task or meet a deadline, it often has a negative effect. Stress can cause us to feel overloaded, overwhelmed and for want of a better word – stressed. Occasional stress generally does not result in long term or chronic health problems, but experiencing stress over a prolonged period can have a detrimental effect on our physical and mental health. It can lower your body's ability to respond to illness by affecting the immune system, which can result in frequent colds and infections.

It can also result in cardiovascular disease, abnormal heart rhythms, heart attacks, high blood pressure, and strokes. Ongoing stress can result in a person withdrawing from friends, family and others and lead to serious mental health problems, including depression and anxiety.

Why do we feel stress?

Stress is an automatic process developed in our early ancestry to ensure our survival. Faced with danger, our body responds instantly, flooding itself with hormones that elevate the heart rate, increase blood pressure, increase breathing, tighten muscles, boost energy and prepare the body to deal with the threat. This is known as the fight/flight response. In our modern world, we are not often faced with actual life threatening situations, nonetheless our body responds to modern stressors in the same way as our ancestors.

What causes stress?

Stress comes up when you feel like the demands of a situation or event are too much to manage. It can come up with everyday situations, such as:

- Managing demands at work or school
- Managing relationships
- Managing finances
- Dealing with unfair treatment
- Managing long-term health problems

Stress can also come up in response to a specific event or situation. Both positive and negative life events can be stressful, especially those that involve major changes to your regular routines. Here are some examples:

- Changes in a relationship
- Changes in housing arrangements
- The death of a family member or friend
- Changes in your job or other source of income

As stress is based on the way you see and react to a situation or event, the events or situations that cause stress are different for different people.

How you feel when issues come up can also affect the way you experience stress. If you feel well and confident in your ability to manage challenges, a problem may not seem very stressful. However, if you already feel stressed or overwhelmed, the same problem may add to your existing stress and feel very overwhelming.

Stressed? Look out for these signs

Most of us experience stress at some point in our lives. Some of us experience it more often than others, and many people have trouble dealing with its effects and overcoming its hold. The signs and symptoms of stress can be different for everyone and you may experience one or more of these symptoms at once. Stress can affect your body, your behaviours, Your feelings and your thoughts. Here are common signs of stress:

Changes in your body

- Tense muscles
- Rapid breathing and heart rate
- Headaches

- Difficulties sleeping well (Insomnia)
- Fatigue
- Changes in sex drive
- Weaker immune system
- Stumbling over words
- High blood pressure
- Lack of energy
- Gastrointestinal Problem (Stomach pain, constipation or diarrhoea)

Changes in your behaviours

- Withdrawing from others
- Fidgeting, feeling restless
- Smoking, drinking or using more drugs than usual
- Avoiding situations that you think are stressful

Changes in your feelings

- Feeling worried or confused
- Feeling angry or irritable
- Feeling overwhelmed or helpless
- Feeling like you can't cope

Changes in your thoughts

- Struggling to concentrate, remember or make decisions
- Losing your self-confidence
- Having a negative attitude towards yourself and your life
- Poor judgment

Stress symptoms: Effects on your body and behaviour

Stress symptoms may be affecting your health, even though you might not realize it. You may think illness is to blame for that irritating headache, your frequent insomnia or your decreased productivity at work.

Indeed, stress symptoms can affect your body, your thoughts and feelings, and your behavior. Being able to recognize common stress symptoms can help you manage them. Stress that's left unchecked can contribute to many health problems, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity and diabetes.

Common effects of stress

On your body	On your mood	On your behavior
Headache	Anxiety	Overeating or under eating
Muscle tension or pain	Restlessness	Angry outbursts
Chest pain	Lack of motivation or focus	Drug or alcohol misuse
Fatigue	Feeling overwhelmed	Tobacco use
Change in sex drive	Irritability or anger	Social withdrawal
Stomach upset	Sadness or depression	Exercising less often

Act to manage stress

If you have stress symptoms, taking steps to manage your stress can have many health benefits. Explore stress management strategies, such as:

- Getting regular physical activity
- Practicing relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing, meditation, yoga, tai chi or massage
- Keeping a sense of humor
- Spending time with family and friends
- Setting aside time for hobbies, such as reading a book or listening to music

Aim to find active ways to manage your stress. Inactive ways to manage stress — such as watching television, surfing the internet or playing video games — may seem relaxing, but they may increase your stress over the long term.

And be sure to get plenty of sleep and eat a healthy, balanced diet. Avoid tobacco use, excess caffeine and alcohol, and the use of illegal substances.

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