



A Review Article: Impact of Environmental and Occupational Stress on Health

Dr. Nalini Chandra

PDF Dept of Family Resource Management Ethelind School of Home Science SHIATS, Allahabad. (INDIA)

Dr. Razia Parvez

Associate Professor, Dept of Family Resource Management Ethelind School of Home Science SHIATS, Allahabad. (INDIA)

ABSTRACT

This review article gives information about occupational and environmental stress and that cause stressful situations and negative health consequences of the workplace stress. Physical, emotional, psychological are the types of stress which leads to various types of diseases such as, headache, loss of concentration, increased heart rate, loss of appetite, Diabetes, Depression, Mental health problems, Heart/Cardiovascular problems, Bowel/Digestive Problems. At certain point stress starts causing major damage to your health, mood, productivity and relationship. This review article provides information about the causes and impact of stress on physical and mental health. By recognizing the signs and symptoms of stress, and taking steps to reduce its harmful effects the quality of life can be improved.

KEYWORDS

Stress, Health, Stressor

SUMMARY

The word **stress** is derived from the Latin word "stringi", which means, "to be drawn tight". In medical terms stress is described as, "a physical or psychological stimulus that can produce mental tension or physiological reactions that may lead to illness." Another popular definition of stress is, "a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize." Researchers define stress as a physical, mental, psychological or emotional response to events that causes bodily or mental tension. Simply put, stress is any outside force or event that has an effect on our body or mind. Occupational stress is a term used to define ongoing stress that is related to the workplace. The stress may have to do with the responsibilities associated with the work itself, or be caused by conditions that are based in the corporate culture or personality conflicts. **Yates, and Iva** (2005) the study work titled "**Reducing Occupational Stress**", the survey explains in detail that 40% of worker in a manufacturing company reported that their job was very stressful and another 25% expressed that this job was extremely increasing the stress towards their family life, this survey has identified various job conditions that can be adopted to maintain a stress less work life which leads to a stress less family life.

Physical: The most common physical symptom is headaches because stress causes people to unconsciously tense their neck, forehead and shoulder muscles. However long-term stress can lead to digestive problems including ulcers, insomnia, fatigue, high blood pressure, nervousness and excessive sweating, heart disease, strokes and even hair loss. Stressors are the causes of stress in any individual.

CUPE, 2003 reported that work stress increases metabolism, blood pressure, cholesterol level, production of acids in stomach, muscular tension, sweating and fats in the blood, decreases protein synthesis, disturbs digestion and immune system. Stress also increases chest, shoulders, back, and neck pains, depression, apathy, headaches, diabetes, social conflicts, weight complaints, menstrual and sexual problems.

The physiological responses to this stress are: high blood pressure, high rate of metabolism, slow rate of protein formation, low functioning of digestive and immune system, high cholesterol level, more fats in blood, body inflammation, quick clotting of blood, faster rate of blood sugar synthesis and

stomach acidity. These symptoms when continually faced by the individuals show that they under stress (**Bickford, 2005**). Work stress is a severe health and safety threat that may result in adverse outcomes.

The stress at work leads to physical and mental hazards. At an extreme, long term stress at work creates psychological disorders which results in the absence of employees from job. Stress affects negatively both work and personal life an individual. Immune system is badly affected by the stress by which an ability of an individual to fight against diseases decreases. Stress at work also results in bad habits like smoking and more intakes of drugs by employees (**WHO, 2004**).

Emotional – these responses are due to stress affecting the mind and include anxiety, anger, depression, irritability, frustration, over-reaction to everyday problems, memory loss and a lack of concentration for any task. Anxiety is normally shown as a response to loss, failure, danger or a fear of the unknown. Anger is a common response to frustration or social stress and can become a danger to other individuals if not kept in check. Depression is frequently seen as an emotional response to upsetting situations such as the death of a loved one, illness and failure.

Psychological – long-term stress can cause psychological problems in some individuals. Symptoms include withdrawal from society, phobias, compulsive behaviors, eating disorders and night terrors. There is linkage between working hours and health outcomes. Long working hours and work at night shift has negative health outcomes i.e. heart diseases, bad pregnancy results, colon cancer, ulcer, ill health and psychological disorder. Noise has adverse effects on health such as sleeping disorder, anxiety, and cardiovascular diseases (**McNamara, 2008**). Memory problems, inability to concentrate, Poor judgment, Seeing only the negative, Anxious or racing thoughts, Constant worrying, short temper, loneliness, inability to relax, depression, Isolating yourself from others, Using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to relax, nervous habits (e.g. nail biting, pacing), eating too much or little are some of the symptoms which shows that an individual is suffering from stress. Irritating behavior, depression, anxiety, unable to concentrate, sleeping disorder, tiredness, heart diseases, digestive system problems, headaches, high blood pressure, and muscular-skeleton problems are the diseases which result a result of stress. If the employees of an organization are suffering stress, this

will ultimately affect the performance of an organization. It will also be risky for an organization to survive in the market (WHO, 2004).

REMEDIES TO RELIEVE STRESS

Nutrition: Good nutrition habits are necessary in the long run to combat the effects of stress. Good nutritional habits are necessary in the long run to combat the effects of stress. Start your day right with breakfast, and keep your energy up and your mind clear with balanced, nutritious meals throughout the day. The temporary “highs” caffeine and sugar provide often end in with a crash in mood and energy. By reducing the amount of coffee, soft drinks, chocolate, and sugar snacks in your diet one may feel more relaxed. Unhealthy eating behaviours, negative mood and chronic stress can lead to anxiety, depression, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease (Dickerson & Kemeny, 2004). Sharma, S. (2015). reviewed article on “Role of nutrition in coping stress” concluded that stress causes unhealthy eating habits such as junk/Fast food intake, Skipping meals, increased Coffee (caffeine) intake, consumption of fats, constantly picking at foods. These unhealthy foods may damage body by hormonal unbalance, Weight gain, Poor Immune System, surge in the Blood Sugar.

Meditation: It is a Process in moving the inner zone of emptiness where it allows your brain to enter a certain zone which body enters when it is asleep. It is recommended to undertake meditation to alleviate stress and obtain peace of mind. Meditation is also considered as a unique technique to remove stress.

Add Humor to your life everyday: It is very important to find the humor in everyday life. Many studies shows that humor can actually help to live longer and keep the stress levels low. The act of laughing helps the body to fight with stress.

Stay cool and relaxed: Just stay cool. Getting upset (angry, anxious, depressed, etc.) does not help.” “Just relax. That’s it – take three or four deep breaths and focus on the problem.”

Exercise: Engage in regular exercise programme. Activities that are continuous and rhythmic—and require moving both your arms and your legs—are especially effective at relieving stress. Walking, running, swimming, dancing, cycling, tai chi, and aerobic classes are good choices. Zen, Yoga and Realistic self-concept are relaxation techniques used to relax body and mind so that stress can easily be remove.

Other Interest & Creativity: The person should take interests in sports, hobbies, studying reading, dancing, singing, learning pianos, all other sorts of leisure activities which may give the opportunity to relieve from the stress. One should involve in activities in which you express your personality, enjoy being a person, hobbies, crafts, or art work.

CONCLUSION

This review of the work stress literature provides us detailed information about work stress, its reasons and its physical and psychological effects on the health. Stress can affect both body and the mind. People under large amounts of stress can become tired, sick, and unable to concentrate or think clearly. Sometimes, they even suffer mental breakdowns. The main focus of this review on types, signs, symptoms and remedies can lead to certain diseases such as diabetes, depression, mental health problems, heart/cardiovascular problems, bowel/digestive Problems. We need to focus on taking care of ourselves physically and adopt some stress relieving methods such as good nutrition, exercise, meditation, adding humor in life, using interest & creativities to make yourself cool and relax to overcome stress. If the level of stress rises then it starts causing major damage to your health, mood, productivity, relationship and your quality of life. This review article helps to cope up with stressful situation. It provides information about the causes and impact of stress on health.

References

1. Dickerson, S. S., & Kemeny, M. E. (2004). Acute stressors and cortisol responses: A theoretical integration and synthesis of laboratory research. *Psychological Bulletin*, 130(3),355–391. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.130.3.355>. Sharma, S. (2015). Role of nutrition in coping stress (Review). *Paripex- Indian Journal of Research*,4, 9, 2250- 1991. Yates, Iva. (2005) Reducing Occupational Stress, *Caribbean Business*, 33, 7, 79, 3/4. Canadian Union of Public Employees.(2003). Enough Workplace Stress: Organizing for Change. <http://www.pbr.co.in/Brochure/d001.pdf>. Bickford, M. (2005). Stress in the Workplace: A General Overview of the Causes, the Effects, and the Solutions. Canadian Mental Health Association Newfoundland and Labrador Division, 1-3.cmhanl.ca/pdf/work%20place%20 stress.pdf. World Health Organization. (2004). Work organization & stress: Systematic problem approaches for employers, managers and trade union representatives. http://www.who.int/occupational_health/publications/pwh3rev.pdf. Stavroula Leka, Amanda Griffiths, Tom Cox. McNamara, R. (2008). Combined and selective effects of environmental and psychosocial workplace hazards: associations with health and well-being in public sector employees (Doctoral dissertation, Cardiff University).