

Stress Causes, Types, And Practical Management Approaches

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Abstract

Stress is one of the aspects that has had an impact on society since the early ages. In most elements, it is considered to have adverse effects, and indeed, they have been seen. Depression, hatred, fear, suicide, and wars, among others, are some of the impacts. There is a dire need to reduce this. This study establishes what stress is, its causes, types of stress, and practical management mannerisms.

Introduction

Stress is a term that has been used in diverse fields, although most of its application is emphasized within the psychological concept. From a mental perspective, it is associated with the feeling of strain and pressure. In other aspects, psychologists have defined it as the feeling people have when they are overloaded and, as a result, struggle to cope with the demands as presented within their surroundings (Cohen et al., 2007). Such requirements, according to research, can be related to finances, work, relationships, and other challenges. Also, anything said to pose real or perceived problems to one's well-being is instrumental towards facilitating stress. Although, in many instances, stress is associated with adverse terms, in other occurrences, it positively manifests itself. In this aspect, it occurs in small amounts that are beneficial to the body and play a significant role in motivation and environmental reaction. Excessive amounts of stress cause bodily harm, as expressed in some concepts above. This essay discusses the types of stress, their indicators, and their impact on the health of a person, among other aspects. They are as discussed below.

Research indicates that there are different types of stress, and several signs and symptoms differentiate each. The first type of stress is referred to as acute stress and is the most commonly known type of stress. Many details about this type of stress are explained in the introduction section. This type of stress, according to researchers, is exciting and thrilling at smaller doses, whereas too much of it is exhausting. Because of the short-term nature associated with this type of stress, medical experts argue that it does not have extensive damage, as compared to other kinds of stress (Segerstrom & Miller, 2004). The most common known symptoms of this type of research include emotional distress associated with anger, irritation, and depression. Secondly, this type of stress is related to muscular problems, including headaches and back pains, which facilitate the pulling of muscles.

The second type of stress is referred to as episodic acute stress. Those familiar with the concepts of

this stress argue that it is associated with those people who suffer from severe stress frequently. Such people, according to research, are short-tempered, irritable and anxious. Furthermore, such people are always said to be in a hurry, and their interpersonal skills reduce with time. In some instances, some people associated with this kind of stress respond with a lot of hostility, indicating how pressurized they are.

Episodic acute stress comes in different ways. Type A is characterized by excessive competitive drive, an aggressive nature in some periods, and impatience in all aspects. According to research, this type of stress facilitates coronary heart disease. The second type of episodic acute stress comes from what researchers have identified to be constant worries. Such people associate many happenings and life aspects with catastrophes and, as a result, remain worried about them in most instances.

Other than episodic acute stress, as described in the above sections, the third type of stress is referred to as chronic stress. This type of stress differs from severe stress in different aspects. While chronic stress is said to be thrilling and exciting in some occurrences, this type of stress is not (Folkman, 2013). Instead, it destroys the body, mind, and lives of victims and is the most dangerous type of stress. Its effects are long-term and can be caused by unstable families, the stress of poverty, being trapped in unhappy marriages, and career problems, among other severe and life-threatening problems.

As researchers have always suggested, this type of research comes when the victim fails to see a solution to a miserable situation. It is usually associated with unrelenting demands, although their solutions are not available at hand. Therefore, some individuals lose hope of finding answers, whose impacts are truly adverse. Furthermore, this type of stress can be caused during childhood and remains forever painful and present in the victim, affecting one's personality.

Health Effects Of Stress

Several theories have tried to establish the relationship between illness and stress and have suggested the availability of the same. Both acute and chronic types of stress cause illness. One of the health effects identified with stress happens within the central respiratory and cardiovascular systems (Quick et al., 2004). Stress hormones affect this system in different ways. During the stress response, the victim breathes very fast in an effort to distribute oxygen-rich blood quickly to the body. The worst happens when the stressed victim has other health problems, such as asthma, because, in such aspects, stress makes breathing even more difficult. On the same note, when one is under stress, the pumping of blood through the heart is done faster. As such, the blood vessels are subjected to a constricting effect, diverting more oxygen to the muscles. Such has been identified as one of the significant causes of blood pressure.

The digestive system is yet another part that is affected by chronic stress. Under stress, the production of sugar by the liver becomes high as a way of giving the body an extra boost of energy.

The worst happens because when under chronic stress, the body might not be able to cope with the ever-increasing excess glucose produced, as just explained. The same facilitates the development of type diabetes.

In addition to the aspect mentioned above, the rush of hormones, rapid breathing, and constant heart rate also cause an adverse effect on the victim's digestive system. Due to this, the victim develops heartburn due to the increased production of stomach acid. Furthermore, this raises the chances of developing ulcers, and in case the victim has them, they surge up. Lastly, stress affects food movement within the body, leading to frequent diarrhoea or constipation. Due to this, the victim might also experience nausea, vomiting and stomach ache.

Besides, stress inhibits different health complications within the sexuality and the reproductive system. Stress causes an exhausting effect on both the body and mind; the long-term aspect of the same causes the testosterone levels in the male gender to drop. Such, according to medical evidence, interferes with sperm production and, in other instances, facilitates erectile dysfunction or impotence. Also, chronic stress is instrumental towards the development of infections in the male reproductive organs, such as the prostate and the testes. For women and ladies, stress affects their menstrual processes and cycles, making them irregular, heavy, and, as a result, painful periods. Also, stress has been associated with the magnification of the aspect of menopause at early ages.

In addition to the aspect mentioned above, the immune system is also affected by constant chronic stress. Findings indicate that stress has been fundamental in negatively stimulating the immune system. Such stimulation can help the victim avoid some types of infections and heal wounds, although, over time, the hormones resulting in the same weaken the immune system of the body, reducing the body's chances to fight off foreign invaders. As a result, people under this condition are associated with common viral illnesses, such as flu and the common cold, as well as other infections. Also, doctors and other medical experts argue that stress increases the time one takes to recover from injuries and different types of illnesses.

Lastly, stress has adverse effects on the central nervous system. The central nervous system consists of different sections: the primary division, including the spinal cord, and the peripheral division, which incorporates the autonomic and somatic nervous systems. The autonomic nervous system plays a significant role in physical response to stress and is further subdivided into the sympathetic nervous system and the parasympathetic nervous system (Michie & Williams, 2003).

In instances where the body is stressed, the sympathetic nervous system generates a flight response. In this happening, the body's energy gets shifted to fight this threat. Here, the adrenal glands are signalled to release adrenalin. During the process, the heart beats extra fast, the respiration rate increases at a higher rate, and the blood vessels in the arm and the muscles dilate. The continued cycle of the same, due to increased chronic stress, leads to a long-term drain on the body and creates wear and tear of the body, causing the body's systems to become problematic.

Management Of Stress

Stress management refers to the techniques and psychotherapies whose intention is to curb a victim's stress levels (Thoits, 2010). In most aspects, emphasis is given to chronic stress since, unlike acute stress, the latter has long-term effects on the victim. The process of stress management has been termed to be one of the most fundamental aspects towards a happy and prosperous life in modern life. Therefore, by finding positive and healthy ways of managing stress, the adverse health consequences, as explained in the previous paragraphs, are eliminated. However, different techniques of stress management are used depending on the type of stress, among other aspects. Below is an explanation of some of the methods that have been found to be useful in the reduction of stress.

The first aspect of stress management incorporates taking a break from the stressor. A stressor, in this aspect, refers to the agent that stimulates stress to the victim. According to psychologists, when one gives oneself the chance to move away from stressors, new important perspectives are bound to arise (Middlebrooks & Audage, 2003). Such aspects give one insight and preferences for doing something different, giving the victim much less time to get stressed. However, this process seems complicated. Hence, experts recommend the use of different mechanisms for its achievement.

Secondly, regular exercise has been said to be instrumental in the reduction of stress. Frequent exercises benefit the body and mind through different approaches, though this has to be achieved after regular programs involving the same, and it has been established to have immediate effects. This can be accomplished through walks, running, swimming, or dancing in the midst of a stressful time.

Besides, research indicates that smiling and laughing are among the factors that contribute the most to the reduction and management of stress. Such has been proven since the human brain is interconnected with emotions and facial expressions. Therefore, in instances that people get stressed, the stress is expressed through the face. Thus, by laughing or smiling, the victim relieves some of the tension, reducing and relieving some of the pressure. As a result, the situation is improved.

Also, experts recommend getting social support as a way of maintaining stress. Achievement of this is facilitated through calling a friend, sending emails, and sharing the victim's concerns or feelings with a second party. However, the victim trusts the second party and ensures that he is an understandable person.

Lastly, meditation has been identified as one of the most effective ways to achieve a stress-free mind. A meditated and prayerful spirit helps the body to achieve the facilitation aspect and, as a result, focus. Through this, people see new perspectives, hence developing self-compassion and forgiveness (Barnes et al., 2003). This process also has immediate effects.

Conclusion

Stress has adverse health effects on the lives of the victims. Society has witnessed a significant number of suicides, divorces, and wars due to an increase in stress all over the world. Everyone has a role to play in reducing such occurrences in society.

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