

The Impact Of Stress On Physical And Mental Health

Posted on May 13, 2020

Introduction to Stress

Stress is evil. It causes minor to major health problems for a person if not addressed properly. It causes mental, physical, social, economic, and emotional problems. Therefore, it is essential to address it timely. However, it is not all bad. Some stress can be good for the health and well-being of a person (Scholz et al., 2009). The paper will discuss the symptoms, causes, and impact of stress on human physical and mental health. It will examine when stress is bad for a person and how it can be good for a person when it causes so many problems.

The Stress Response

Stress is a way of responding to a demand or threat that is kicked on in a situation of fight or flight. It is a way of protection that alerts the body and mind from dangers. When threatened or demanded, the nervous system releases stress hormones such as adrenaline or cortisol, which prepare the body for the emergency. During stress, the heart beats faster, blood pressure increases, and sometimes palms feel sweaty. In stress, the response becomes sharper, and the focus increases. Stress can be caused by stressors, and it can be outside factors, or it can be internally generated. It can be because of academic or professional workload, bad relationships, high demand and job loss or divorce, or the death of a loved one. It can be caused by admission to a new school or college or a new relationship. It can be due to positive factors such as marriage or negative events such as death. The internal factors that generate stress are excessive worry about small events or big events, irrational thoughts, or negativity. It can also be caused by inflexibility, high expectations, and lack of self-esteem (Lupien et al., 2009; Thoits, 2010).

Symptoms of Stress

There can be cognitive, emotional, physical, or behavioral symptoms. The symptoms can manifest singularly or combined. Cognitive symptoms include constant worrying, lack of concentration, and poor judgment. Emotional symptoms include depression, mood swings, irritability, isolation, and anxiety. Physical symptoms of stress are a headache, disturbed stomach, nauseous feelings, constipation or diarrhea, chest pain, flu or cold, and blood pressure. Behavioral symptoms of stress consist of insomnia or sleeping too much, eating too much or too little, neglecting responsibilities, drug abuse such as drinking and smoking, isolation from social life, and nervousness. If these

symptoms persist for a longer period, the person must seek help. Its neglect of the symptoms might cause serious health, social and mental problems. And the symptoms can lead to other symptoms and problems. For instance, lack of sleep can result in poor eating habits which can lead to heart and other diseases (Dhabhar, 2009; Scholz et al., 2009; Thoits, 2010).

Effects of Chronic Stress

Chronic stress can interfere with daily life and become dangerous. It causes fatigue, lack of motivation, and concentration. It can cause headaches, stomach problems, high blood pressure, and heart rate, which lead to coronary problems and death. It can also lead to depression, which would cause social isolation with suicidal thoughts and tendencies. It limits normal working habits, leading to poor performance at school and jobs that might lead to expulsion or financial problems. Professional life demands a working attitude that is positive and detail-oriented with responsibility. But constant stress can contribute to a lack of attention and motivation to work which will lead to absences and sloppy work. Consequently, it negatively impacts the working habits of people. Stress results in irritability and anger, which might hamper relationships with friends and family. It will destroy rapport with colleagues, leading to isolation, which leads to a different set of problems at work. For instance, most of the people prefer to befriend friendly and frank people. But relationships will be hampered when one person is constantly irritated and aloof. Hence, constant and regular stress with increased levels of cortisol in the blood impacts the health and social well-being of a person (Lupien et al., 2009; Scholz et al., 2009).

Potential Benefits of Moderate Stress

However, the stress is not always bad. It is good if the levels are mild. First of all, it is a response to danger. It is designed to alert the person when there is a danger. It makes the body ready to respond appropriately in time to save the person from embarrassment or danger. It also sharpens the senses of a person and helps the person focus. It motivated me to work hard and focus on achieving a goal. For instance, if a person is scared of exams, it pushes the person to study for the exam, which will ultimately help in getting a better grade. It helps people to accept challenges and meet them. The perspective of embarrassment or shame might push me to work harder to achieve my daily goals. It increases the focus levels of a person greatly, and it can help to sharpen the senses to work with improved senses. It boosts brain power by releasing a hormone called neurotrophins, which improves the connection between neurons and enhances productivity (Dhabhar, 2009; Macmillan, 2014). Therefore, all stress is not bad. It can improve the perspective of success significantly if controlled mild or moderate.

Immunity and Resilience

Moreover, it increases immunity and resilience by increasing control in a person. As it prepares the body for responses to dangers such as injury, infections, or attacks, it releases interleukins, which are chemicals to regulate an immune system that enhances immunity for the time being. Also, it is crucial to generate a sense of control in a person. If a person regularly faces stressful events, the person will develop a sense of physical and psychological control. The level of stress will make the person resilient to stressful events, and they will be able to improve their productivity without worrying or panicking about an event (Jaret, 2015; Melbourne Child Psychology, 2017).

Stress and Child Development

Lastly, it helps in the [development of a child](#) even before they are born. If pregnant women are stressed mildly or moderately, it improves the motor skills of their babies before the age of two. Therefore, stress can be beneficial for people, and it must not be mistreated when it enhances the abilities and senses of people in society (Jaret, 2015; Macmillan, 2014).

Managing Stress Effectively

It can be beneficial if it is managed properly. Moderate to mild stress is good for enhancing the focus and productivity of a person. But it is bad if it is severe. Regardless, a person can control and manage their stress levels most of the time. A person who believes that they can control and manage stress is less likely to be impacted by it. However, those who perceive the level of stress as unmanageable will have problems dealing with it as well. Hence, it depends on the person and their confidence levels regarding stress to be able to handle it. A person with a positive attitude is less likely to develop stress-related issues compared to a person who has low self-esteem and considers that stress is harmful (Jaret, 2015; Macmillan, 2014; Melbourne Child Psychology, 2017). Thus, the management of stress is essential for positive results. It is evident that a person can change and control their productivity as well as a sense of control to handle any situation. It is important in case of stress to be able to have a positive result and suppress the negative consequences.

Conclusion

To conclude, stress is not always bad. It can boost productivity, focus, immunity, and response levels, but it is necessary for the person to be able to handle it. But if it is unmanaged and severe, it can have debilitating effects on the person. Therefore, a person must have a sense and perception of control to be able to handle it and minimize the [harmful consequences](#) of stress.

Reference List

Dhabhar, F.S., 2009. Enhancing versus suppressive effects of stress on immune function: implications for immunoprotection and immunopathology. *Neuroimmunomodulation* 16, 300-317.

Jaret, P., 2015. The Surprising Benefits of Stress [WWW Document]. Greatergood.Berkeley.edu. URL https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/the_surprising_benefits_of_stress

Lupien, S.J., McEwen, B.S., Gunnar, M.R., Heim, C., 2009. Effects of stress throughout the lifespan on the brain, behaviour and cognition. *Nat. Rev. Neurosci.* 10, 434.

Macmillan, A., 2014. 5 Weird Ways Stress Can Actually Be Good for You [WWW Document]. Health.com. URL <https://www.health.com/stress/5-weird-ways-stress-can-actually-be-good-for-you>

Melbourne Child Psychology, 2017. The Benefits of Stress [WWW Document]. Melb. Child Psychol. Sch. Psychol. Serv. URL <https://www.melbournechildpsychology.com.au/blog/benefits-of-stress/>

Scholz, U., La Marca, R., Nater, U.M., Aberle, I., Ehlert, U., Hornung, R., Martin, M., Kliegel, M., 2009. Go no-go performance under psychosocial stress: beneficial effects of implementation intentions. *Neurobiol. Learn. Mem.* 91, 89-92.

Thoits, P.A., 2010. Stress and health: Major findings and policy implications. *J. Health Soc. Behav.* 51, S41-S53.