

Stress Impact on Health

Name

Institutional affiliation

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Stress is a change that occurs within the environment that requires the reaction of the body for adjustment (APA.org, 2016). The responses are mental, physical, or emotional depending on the forces of the change induced. Stress can either be positive or negative. Positive stress creates a positive force while negative stress creates a negative force, which can be of harm to the body if not taken care of. The current task describes the impact of stress on health by focusing on negative stress and how it affects the normal body functioning.

Stress makes one breathe harder. This may not be a problem among most people but for people with a lung disease or asthma, it might be difficult for them to access the required oxygen. By breathing harder, then it means that the body is struggling to get the right amount of oxygen for energy generation, which could lead to heart problems. There are also cases of acute stress where the trachea is usually blocked leading to asthma attacks (Lovallo, 2005). Acute stress also leads to panic attacks due to hyperventilation among people who are prone to panic attacks.

Acute stress leads to increase in heart rate, which affects blood pressure. An increase in heart rate leads to strong contractions of heart muscles. Blood vessels dilate, which increases the amount of blood being pumped to large muscles. The blood vessel dilation leads to an increase in blood pressure. In cases where acute stress is prolonged, the risks for getting hypertension or a heart attack are high (McEwen, 2008). Additionally, prolonged cases of acute stress leads to inflammation of the circulatory system, which has been considered as a predisposing factor to heart attack.

Acute stress may lead to an increase in blood sugar levels among individuals. Stress triggers the production of stress hormones such as epinephrine and cortisol. The production of

these hormones leads to the production of more glucose by the liver. The glucose is meant to provide energy required for “fight or flight.” This is usually a major problem mostly for people with Type II diabetes, since the extra glucose if not used for “fight or flight” could lead to an increase in blood sugar levels (Lovallo, 2005).

In summary, stress is harmful to the body if not well managed. For most people, stress is common and may not be harmful to their body. However, acute stress may prove to be harmful to individuals with health complications such as diabetes and high blood pressure. It is therefore important to ensure that people have the skills required in managing stress in ensuring that it does not affect human well being.

References

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