

Stress Among Youth: Causes and its Management in Recent Times

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Abstract: *Youth are the leaders for the next generation who govern the country and helps in the nation's economic development. However, an academic, social pressure and pressure of getting a good job with good salary etc. factors affect their performance and life. These different kind of mental pressures can leads to stress among the young people. Stress is an unavoidable reality of life which can be good where it can trigger our fight-or-flight mechanism to help in case of emergencies but too much stress can harm our health and body. Different individual will have different kind of response to the stress; therefore, it is important to learn what stresses us out and how to cope with it. Among all types of stress faced by youth, academic stress is one of the reasons why some students fall into deeper problems such as depression and anxiety. They obtain stress from overworking, over thinking, over exaggerating any situation and by working too hard or keeping up too long to do something, this lead to an awful effect on their lives. There are various components like not having enough sleep, troubles in education and job stress, and pains occur due to all these situations, are very bad to their body. Thus, this paper aims to discuss the various kind of stress among youth, level of stress, effect of stress, causes of stress and remedies to cure the stress at different stages.*

Keywords: Anxiety, Depression, Job stress, Mental health, Phobia, Stress.

1. Introduction

Stress is the reaction of person's body and mind to something that causes a change in balance. Stress is a common aspect of many different emotions like frustration, anxiety, anger, fear, worry, sadness and despair. Stress is one of the conditions that can threaten our state of mind and well-being (Wahed and Hassan, 2017). Stress can affect everyone regardless of their age, gender, educational status or socioeconomic status (Monteiro et al., 2014). For some people, stress may refer to an uncomfortable emotion, while for some, it is a situation that affects someone's manner of thinking (Tandukar et al., 2020). Stress can be defined as any situation that evokes negative thoughts and feelings in a person (Omar et al., 2019). The same situation is not stressful for all individuals, and all individuals do not experience the same negative thoughts and feelings during stress (Mamun et al., 2019). In the academic scenario, stress has become an inevitable factor in the students' life (Shahmohammadi, 2011). Family problems, improper coping strategies, lack of interest in studies, insufficient essential facilities for students and other difficulties (Shermeyer et al., 2019) are the factors which can result in high, sometimes extreme level of stress that can eventually be detrimental to the students' health (Mehanna and Richa, 2006).

Stress can happen when a specific situation triggers someone's emotions and negative thinking (Wang, 2005). However, this does not apply to everyone since everyone has their own types of pressures that can be the reason for the stress itself (Johnson et al., 2009). Students are the one who govern the country in upcoming times; however, many pressures affect their performance and life (Franken, 1994). These pressures can sometimes cause stress in day to day

life of students (Darshan et al., 2013). Thus, it is most likely for this group of people to be affected with academic stress due to continuous pressure that they received.

Academic and environmental stressors contribute the most towards peoples level of stress out of five main domains namely physiological, social, environmental psychological and academic (Anonymous, 2022). Students are subjected to all kind of academic pressures where they continuously think they need to do well in their study and feels uncertain about their future (Cvetkovski et al., 2012). The mindset of the students also contributes to the ongoing pressures among students where the majority of students feel the need to secure a high Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) in their study to secure a better job for the future (Edwards et al., 2010). This type of mindset will eventually trigger mental (Andreassen et al., 2016) and emotional pressure, tension, or stress that occurs due to the demands of university life (Larcombe et al., 2016), which causes academic stress among university students (Pitt et al., 2018). It is essential to identify academic stress among students to be able to provide the solution to help reduce the probability of more students facing this problem, thus promote healthy academic life among students in higher institutions (Denovan and Macaskill, 2017).

Body reaction to any kind of changes which requires adjustment or response is stress and it change with physical, mental, and emotional responses (Subbarao, 2017). Stress is a very usual in life in which person might experience it from the surrounding environment, body and thoughts (Gibbons, 2010). Stress commonly affects one's thoughts, feeling, and behavior (Koolhaas et al., 2011), which may lead to serious health repercussions such as heart disease, obesity and diabetes (Baune et al., 2012). There are several factors of

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stress such as finances, work, relationships, and other situations (Arslan et al., 2020). Stress can be positive source of energy and essential to survival (Lin and Huang, 2012). During facing challenge, human react physically to protect us by activating “fight-or-flight” mode. Human’s body produces a large quantity of adrenaline, non-adrenaline hormones and chemicals, which helps to increase mobilization of energy sources and also helps to adapt the individual to its new circumstance (Yusufov et al., 2019). The stress level is determined by the environment or situation the person face and tends to feel.

2. Kind of Stress

There is different type of stress such as acute stress, episodic acute stress and chronic stress. Acute stress is common short-term stress that occurred (Anonymous, 2022). It is caused by keep thinking about the pressures of situations or events recently occurred, or upcoming in future. When the situations are resolved, the stress will automatically be reduced or removed (Lin et al., 2019). The frequent occurrence of acute stress may lead to chronic stress that is more harmful. Besides, episodic acute stress is the people who frequently experience acute stress, or whose lives present frequent triggers of stress. A person who has too many commitments and poor organization has episodic stress symptoms. It causes irritable and tense which can affect relationships. Occurrence of devastating events or situation such as major financial problem, dysfunctional family or unhappy relationship with loved one can cause chronic stress. It also can be caused by a traumatic experience early in life. Chronic stress can continue unnoticed. People with chronic stress are likely to experience final breakdown that may lead to serious consequences such as heart disease, violent actions, strokes and even suicide (Struthers et al., 2000).

3. Stress and Mental Health

Stress is determined by various means of psychological, mental, emotional, physical and in other forms (Ryan et al., 2019). Stress usually originates from unhealthy environment which can be from the unexpected childhood and goes till lifelong. Studies state that Indians are the highest sufferers of stress because of lack of employment, intimate relationships, betrayal, unexpected childhood, etc. Sometimes it leads from childhood to intimate relationships with peer groups which are often justified by stressors to get rid out of stress. In order to get out of stress people get addicted to smoking, consuming liquor and drugs are common among adolescent and adults. One in four people in the world is affected by mental or neurological disorders at some point in their lives (Daniel et al., 2013).

Approximately 450 million people worldwide currently suffer from such conditions, placing mental disorders among the leading causes of ill-health and disability. Presently in India alone there around 3.5% of stressors in which 10–17 % of them are in the primary stages of stress. Many of them do not know that they are affected by stress and if they know they are affected by stress they do not know how and where to get treatment. Often they fear that the society will think themselves as lunatic or psychos. Stress is mostly likely to

be common among youth especially between the age group of 20–25 years. WHO (2001) predicts that 20% of India’s population will suffer from some form of mental illness by the year 2020. We are woefully under-equipped to handle mental health issues on such a large scale.

Stress doesn’t spare anybody; whether at work place or at home. Students are no exception to this. In fact, they are the ones who are worst hit by stress due to various factors. Stress results in various psychological disorders such as depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, emotional strain (such as dissatisfaction, fatigue and tension), maladaptive behaviors (such as aggression and substance abuse), and cognitive impairment (such as problems in concentration and memory (Jadoon et al., 2010). These conditions may lead to poor concentration on work, and biological reactions causing cardiovascular disease. Depression is some kind of mood disorder. It may take the form of emotional, cognitive, motivational and physical; Sadness, rejection, feeling of hopelessness and negative thoughts, change in aptitude, low self-esteem, unhappiness, joylessness, dullness, sleeplessness, dissatisfaction, loss of interest in hobbies, family activities and recreation and loss of motivation, energy and gratification or pleasure in life may be the end results of depression (Penninx et al., 2012). IFRED (2005) has categorized depression into three types, namely major depression, dysthymia, and Bipolar disorder. Anxiety is a subjective state of internal discomfort, dread, foreboding, which manifests itself in cognitive, behavioral and physiological symptoms, such as worrying, impaired attention, poor concentration, memory problems, hyperventilation, sweating, diarrhea, trembling and restlessness. The five major types of anxiety are panic disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder and Phobias. Stress can be defined as a consequence of inability to cope up with some physical or psychological requirements or demands. In his study, “stress is defined as a complex, multidimensional negative emotion”. Another study explains stress straightly related with psychological features such as creativity, broadening, relaxation and reframing. Some authors argue that stress may lead to heart disease, blood pressure fluctuations and psychological problems.

4. Causes of Stress among Youngster

Those events which provoke stress are known as stressors, and they cover a whole range of situations such as academic pressure, relationship problems, career aspects, financial problems and so on. A study shows that students find out their life to be stressful when it comes to studies issues. Student might be stressed with their exams, tutorials, assignments, projects and lab experiments etc. The second highest cause of stress in young people’s life is financial issues (Robotham, 2008). Youngster might have difficulties in financial due to poor family background and poor spending habits, involvement in clubs and organizations. Students who involved in clubs/ organizations might have difficulties in balancing their life between studies and organization activities. And there are students who feel stressful with future, time management and lecturer issues. Some of the main stressor among youngster is:

4.1 Academics

The worry about academic performance among the students can cause stress symptoms such as anxiety, insomnia or changes in appetite and overall mood (Ansari and Oskrochi, 2014). According to a study now a day, youth have poor study habits and cram last minute studying in the night before exams. The fear of exams, good class performance and workload create stress among students. The major cause of stress among university students is a lot of assignments and their deadlines.

4.2 Career

Job Stress is a chronic disease caused among the current youth that negatively affect an individual's performance and overall well-being of the body and mind. The high competition among people, an inconsiderate work colleague, a lack of job security and many more, there are numerous causes of job stress. The people have fear of not getting the job opportunity and competition in the market.

4.3 Finances

Youngster especially from middle class feels stress about money. Most young people do not have jobs, or even they have the job but they do not pay as much as they would like for them to. Young people want to maintain the lifestyle and fulfill the demand of different trendy articles like mobile, bikes and cars etc. If they fail to fulfill the requirement then it creates a stress among them.

4.4 Time Management

A lack of time management also considered as the major cause of stress on youth, whether secondary or tertiary. Balancing academics, peer activities, part-time job and home life can be difficult and challenging for youngster.

4.5 Relationships

Relationships are another big aspect of stress because everyone wants to have friends, whether they are close friends or just acquaintances. If a person finds that making friends is a bit harder than they had expected, stress is present here as well.

5. Effects of Stress

Indeed, stress can affect the body, thoughts and feelings, as well as behavior. Being able to recognize common symptoms of stress can help to manage it. Stress which was left unchecked can contribute to many health problems like high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, diabetes and many more. There are five different aspects in the effects of stress which are discussed below:

5.1 Behavioural effects

Overeating or under-eating, drug or alcohol misuse, angry outbursts, use of tobacco, social withdrawal and exercising less are some of the behavioral effects of stress. From a study, data shows that majority of the students tend to have

changes in their sleeping patterns and are having the inability to rest, relax or let down. Aside from that, there are some students who tend to outburst in anger when they are stressed and some students experienced changes in eating habits and some students want to stay quiet when stressed. It is necessary for the stressed persons go to find the ways to resolve their problems that are caused by the stress (Anonymous, 2021).

5.2 Psychological effects

A study shows the psychological or emotional effects of stress among students and based on the data, feeling sad, moody, grief and depression is the highest psychological effect of stress (Bewick et al., 2010). The second highest effect is followed by feeling of fear and anxiety which is experienced, and besides that, some students felt helpless or hopeless when they are stressed.

5.3 Physical effects

Headache, chest pain, fatigue, muscle tension or pain, change in sex drive, stomach upset, and sleep problems are some of the physical effects of stress. A study shows the physical effects of stress and the data depicted that all students are having effects in term of their health. The highest physical effect experienced by students is headache when they feel stressed. The next highest effect is followed by fatigue and increasing or decreasing in appetite. These physical effects can lead to much bigger health problem later (Anonymous, 2018).

5.4 Cognitive effects

Cognitive is directly related to the process of thinking and reasoning. Anxiety, lack of motivation, lack of focus, restlessness, feeling overwhelmed, sadness or depression, irritability or anger etc. are the result of cognitive effects of stress among young generation. Based on the study, highest cognitive effect of stress chosen by people is slowness in thinking or analyzing. The second highest cognitive effect is students tend to face difficulties in concentrating. Besides that, there are also students that are facing memory problems or forgetfulness. However, there are also some students that does not face any cognitive effects which means that they are able to handle their stressful situations (Daniel et al., 2013).

5.5 Social effects

Social effects of stress among student's shows by a study which depicted that majority of students chose to withdraw or isolate themselves from people when they are stressed. It can state that people prefer to be alone when facing stressful situations. However, this action can be unhealthy whereas it is better to search for friends or someone close to express feelings to.

6. Signs and Symptoms of Stress

Stress is a normal human reaction and its responses help the body to adjust in new situations. During stress the body's autonomic nervous system controls heart rate, breathing,

vision changes and more. When the body faces stressful situation, fight-or-flight response helps to deal with it. When an individual has chronic stress, continued activation of the stress response causes wear and tear on the body, physical, emotional and behavioral symptoms develop.

6.1 Physical symptoms of stress

Stress affects our body through physically or physiologically. Stress can cause ache and pain throughout the body, chest pain, and headache, muscle tension or jaw clenching and due to these entire factors person's heart rate also alleviated. Sometimes stress may lead to some stomach or digestive problems such as diarrhea or constipation, and also causes nausea, dizziness or shaking, these problems weaken person's immune system and increase the incidence of frequent cold or flu. Stress can trouble sleeping which leads to exhaustion and people also having trouble with sex. Due to excess stress people's blood pressure also alleviated (Anonymous, 2021).

6.2 Emotional and cognitive symptoms of stress

Anxiety or irritability, agitation, depression or general happiness, panic attacks, moodiness or anger, sadness or feeling overwhelmed and constant worrying etc. are some of the common emotional symptoms of stress. If person does not share his/ her feelings and problems to others they feel loneliness and sometime feel isolated. Stress affects person's mental ability which leads to memory problem and causes inability to concentrate. In stress negative thoughts occur generally, it leads to poor judgment and impact people's perception (Anonymous, 2019).

6.3 Behavioural symptoms of stress

Stress does impact people's behavior and leads to bad habits such as drinking alcohol too much or too often, smoking, using drugs, etc. (Sahu et al., 2022). Gambling, overeating or developing an eating disorder, insomnia or oversleeping and nervous habits like nail biting, all are the behavioral symptoms of stress. Participating compulsively in sex, excess shopping or constant internet browsing like behavior comes in person's life (Anonymous, 2022).

7. Method to Relieve Stress

Stress management techniques can lower levels of stress, resulting in reduction of disease symptoms, lowering of biological indicators of disease, and prevention in life. Progressive muscle relaxation and diaphragmatic breathing techniques are effective treatment methods for reducing stress and anxiety that accompanies daily life and chronic illness (Kassymova et al., 2018). Psychologists describe stress as a tension experienced by a person over a period of time that spoils their ability to perform. Due to the different internal and external demands put upon their shoulders, stress has also become a part of the student's academic life. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to these problems as transitions occur at an individual and social level. Coursework deadlines and examinations are an unavoidable part of a student's life, because of this they get fewer hours

of sleep than recommended. Lack of sleep is troubling due to irregular sleep cycles are correlated with low academic performance and poor quality of sleep is associated with increased stress. If a person has stress symptoms, taking steps to manage the stress can have many health benefits.

Stress management strategies includes regular physical activity/ exercise, practicing relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, yoga, tai chi or massage, etc. (Azizi, 2011). Keeping a sense of humor and spending time with family and friends by just talking and sharing the problems also helps in reducing stress level. By diverting the mind by setting aside time for hobbies, such as reading a book, playing or listening to music also helpful in stress reduction. By playing with pets or kids, by taking proper sleep, eating healthy and balanced diet all techniques are helpful in managing the stress level. Through avoiding tobacco, drug or alcohol use, stress can be reduced. If the stress level is extreme and can't handle by the person itself, then talk with therapist can be helpful and should take prescribed medication if necessary (Anonymous, 2020).

Inactive ways to manage stress such as internet surfing, watching television or playing video games may seem relaxing, but they may increase the stress for the long term. We can't avoid stress, but we can stop it from becoming overwhelming by practicing some daily strategies like exercise when person feel symptoms of stress coming on, even a short walk can boost the person's mood. At the end of each day, take a moment to think about what we've accomplished, not what we didn't get done, Set goals for a day, week and month. Narrowing our view will help to feel more in control of the moment and long-term tasks. Consider talking to a therapist or healthcare provider about the worries also helpful (Anonymous, 2022).

Many daily strategies can help to keep stress at bay like try relaxation activities like meditation, yoga, breathing exercises and muscle relaxation etc. Different programs are available online, in television, in smart-phone apps, and at many gyms and community centers. Take good care of the body every day just by eating right, exercising and getting enough sleep help the body to handle the stress much better. Stay positive and practice gratitude, acknowledging the good parts of the day or life. Accept that nobody can control everything. Find ways to let go of worry about situations at we cannot change. Learn to say "no" to additional responsibilities when we are too busy or feel stressed. Stay connected with people who keep others calm, make happy, provide emotional support and help with practical things. A friend, family member, colleague or neighbor can become a good listener or share responsibilities so that stress doesn't become overwhelming.

8. Recommendations for action in an institute

For maintaining positive mental health, knowledge-sharing practices and activities such as systematic education in mental health for all educators and students can help. Good communication plays a key role in the stress management. Having positive relationship with the people around helpful in reducing the level of stress. Attention to organizational conditions for effective mental health and these include

proper educational plan, protocols for decision making, systematic training, role clarity, implementation, collaboration, and system communication. Ensuring adequate numbers of trained mental health professionals in an institute/ organization. Organize awareness programs on most critical aspects like abuse prevention, suicide prevention and mental health literacy etc.

9. Conclusion

Stress is a common issue in everyone's life, if handles effectively, it give the motivation to strive for their betterment. Some cope up stress efficiently, but most of them face negative impact of stress,so its management became important. Stress can be good or bad, it depends on us how we perceive or experiencing it including how well we cope with it. People should always be vigilant with stress, so that they can better themselves and move forward in life.

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