



HOME SCIENCE & WOMEN EMPOWERMENT



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35. Stress and Women Health



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Introduction:

The mind and body are linked throughout our lives. Stress can involve a recent change or a daily pressure. Stress happens to everyone and can be motivating and productive or negative and destructive. Tension and anxiety as well as depression are frequent emotional consequences of stress. According to the American Academy of family physicians stress is an expression of the body's natural instinct to protect itself. While the stress response way warn us of immediate danger, like a fast approaching car, prolonged stress can negatively affect your physical and emotional health.

Women are socialized to be the caretakers of others. More women than men have both a career outside the home and continue to try to complete traditional responsibilities after hours. Over 70% of married women with children under the age of 18 are employed outside the home. Sociologists describe women as struggling to achieve the male standard at work while trying to maintain the perfect wife and mother standards at home.

Objectives:

1. To study symptoms of stress
2. To study stress affects women's health
3. To study solutions for to reduce the stress.

Methodology:

Secondary data is used for collection of information.

Result and Discussion:

A women progress through life stages, hormonal balance associated with premenstrual, post partum and menopausal changes can affect chemical vulnerability to stress and depression. Depressive disorders account for close to 41.95 of the disability from neuron psychiatric disorders among women compared to 29% among men. Women leading mental health problems of the depression, organic brain syndromes and dementias.

Lifetime prevalence rate of violence against women ranges from 16% to 50%. Depression, anxiety, psychological distress, sexual violence, domestic violence and escalating rates of substance use affect women to a greater extent than men.

Symptoms of Stress:

Feeling tense, depression, poor memory, poor concentration, increased alcohol consumption, anger, difficulty on decision making, frequent mood swings, negative thinking, distractibility, excess of eating and feeling overwhelmed these are the symptoms of stress in women.

Stress Affects Women's Health:

Stress can affect nearly every system in the body and it may be undermining women's health in more ways than you realize. Specific stress includes

1. Irregular Menstrual Cycle Period

Acute and chronic stress can fundamentally alter the body's hormone balance, which can lead to missed, late or irregular periods.

2. Hair Loss

Significant emotional or psychological stress can cause a physiological imbalance which contributes to hair loss. Stress can disrupt the life cycle of the hair, causing it to go into its falling out stage. While you may not notice hair loss during or immediately following a period of stress the changes can occur three to six months later.

3. Poor Digestion

Prolonged stress can greatly impact the digestive system by increasing stomach acid, causing indigestion and discomfort, and in some cases contributing to the development of ulcers. According to a study published in November 2017 in the journal *Frontiers in system Neuroscience* even Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) which affects more in Women. Reducing stress is the key to maintaining a healthy digestive system.

4. Weight Gain

Higher levels of cortisol to a lower waist to hip ratio in women i.e more weight around the belly area as well as a decreased metabolism. High stress levels are also correlated with increased appetite and sugar cravings which can lead to weight gain.

5. Increased Risk Of Heart Disease And Stroke

According to a 2012 study of over 22000 women, women under high amounts of stress at work were 40% more likely to experience a cardiovascular event a heart attack or stroke than women who reported low levels of job related stress. Strokes are also more common among individuals with stressful lives and tightly wound personalities.

6. Skin Reactions

Stress can lead to breakouts and even itchy rashes and hives in some people.

7. Emotional Conditions

From being in a blue or irritable mood to more serious mental issues like depression, your emotional health suffers when there is stress in your life.

8. Sleep Problems

Trouble falling or staying asleep is common in women affected by stress and this is particularly counter productive since a good night sleep can help ease stress.

9. Difficulty In Concentration

Stress makes it hard to focus and be effective in your responsibilities at home or work and that can compound your problems if the stress comes from your job to begin with.

10. Lowered Immune Response

One of the more complicated physical reactions to stress is your body's lessened ability to fight off disease, whether it's a cold or a flare up of a chronic condition.

According to the National Women's Health Information Center the effects of stress on women's physical and emotional health can range from headache to stomach trouble to back pain. Stress increases the risk of Accidents, Headaches, eating disorders, Asthma, Arthritis, Cancer, and Sexual

dysfunction. Mental illness is associated with a significant burden of morbidity and disability.

Solutions for Reducing the Stress:

By eating well balanced diet and avoiding the fast food. Women should improve physical as well as mental health. According to Dr.Heim, we do know that exercise is a phenomenal way of dealing with stress and depression. Research shows that getting active lift your spirits by increasing hormones and neurochemicals that improve your mood. Other popular stress busters include yoga and meditation. Though some manage stress with regular exercise, others are relying on sedentary activities such as listening to music, reading, watching television or a movie and playing game.

World Health Organization(WHO) Focus in Women's Mental Health

Build evidence on the prevalence and causes of mental health problems in women as well as on the mediating and protective factors. Promote the formulation and implementation of health policies that address women's needs and concerns from childhood to old age.Enhance the competence of primary health care providers to recognize and treat mental health consequences of domestic violence, sexual abuse and acute and chronic stress in women

Conclusion

Women suffer physical as well as emotional problems due to stress. Women should improve physical as well as mental health. Women need regular balanced diet and exercise for healthy life.

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