

Stress: A silent killer

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Abstract

Stress is a natural feeling of not being able to cope with specific demands and events. However, stress can become a chronic condition if a person does not take steps to manage it. These demands can come from work, relationships, financial pressures, and other situations, but anything that poses a real or perceived challenge or threat to a person's well-being can cause stress. Stress can be a motivator, and it can even be essential to survival. The body's fight-or-flight mechanism tells a person when and how to respond to danger. However, when the body becomes triggered too easily, or there are too many stressors at one time, it can undermine a person's mental and physical health and become harmful. Stress is our body's response to pressure. Many different situations or life events can cause stress. It is often triggered when we experience something new, unexpected or that threatens our sense of self, or when we feel we have little control over a situation. We all deal with stress differently. Our ability to cope can depend on our genetics, early life events, personality and social and economic circumstances. Sometimes, this stress response can be useful: it can help us push through fear or pain so we can run a marathon or deliver a speech, for example. Our stress hormones will usually go back to normal quickly once the stressful event is over, and there won't be any lasting effects. However, too much stress can cause negative effects. It can leave us in a permanent stage of fight or flight, leaving us overwhelmed or unable to cope. Long term, this can affect our physical and mental health. This article aims to provide information about stress, its effects and strategies to manage it.