

# Role of Psychological development on effect of Examination Stress on Adolescents Health

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## **ABSTRACT**

*A wide variety of meaning has been given to term 'Stress'. One of the most common nation is that stress represents some circumstances or situations external to an individual that makes sudden or extra ordinary demand upon him. There are great difference in the sensitivity of individuals to various stressors like appearing for examination is one of the very common situations, which an adolescent finds difficult of cope up with. Right approach and right coping strategies may stimulate an adolescent to overcome anxiety and maximize own performance in the examination. Examination and interviews are undoubtedly stress busters which makes the stress line arousal situation for the adolescent or a common person. Every child goes in rough such situations and learns to cope up with stress arising ov+ of them. They are also learnt by imitation of the parents or parent figures.*

**KEYWORDS:-Adolescents, stress; coping with examination stress**

## **I.INTRODUCTION**

Stress is the specific and non-specific response of the body to any kind of physiological pressure or unwanted forces due to environmental or peripheral effects.

### **Adolescents' stress**

It can cause adverse effect in future. Stress can affect anyone from children to adolescents to adults. The causes of teen stress are totally different and the they need somewhat different stress management. Teen stress is similar to the adult stress in terms of the signs and symptoms. But the causes of teen stress are totally different and they need somewhat different stress management programs for dealing stress. It is estimated that teen form 20 percent of the total population. Yet they are a neglected group of the population. The adolescents group is the intermediate group between the dependent childhood and the independent adulthood. This transition from childhood to adulthood is never so easy. This group is a vulnerable group to both physical and emotional stress. There are problems everywhere for them-problems at home with their parents and siblings, problems in the school with their friends and education. Adolescent's medicine is a new concept in the field of medicine. The adolescents cannot be treated as either adults or kids because their problems are totally different. In this a lot of

physical and emotional changes occur during this period, which are very significant in the shaping a person. There are two kinds of changes mainly

- 1. Physical changes:** The physical changes include, increase in the weight, increase in the height, change in voice, development of secondary sexual characters, menarche (beginning of menstruation) in girls.
- 2. Mental changes:** They are equally significant which include, feeling of independence, attraction towards opposite sex, aggressive behavior, experimenting, new things including substance of abuse.

What's stressful for you may be quite different from what's stressful to yours best friend, yours spouse, or the person next door. For example: some people enjoy speaking in public; others are terrified. Some people are more productive under deadline pressure; others are miserably tense. Some people are eager to help family and friends through difficult times; others find it very stressful. Some people feel comfortable complaining about bad service in a restaurant; others find it so difficult to complain that they prefer to suffer in silence. Some people may feel that changes at work represent a welcome opportunity; others worry about whether they will be able to cope. People react to stress in different ways. Once you identify your own signs of stress, they can serve as your personal early warning system. Think of yourself as a car that's equipped with lights and gauges to warn you if any problems are developing. If you keep an eye on the gauges and catch the trouble early, the problem may be easy to fix. If you ignore the warning signs, you may be in for a major repair job. You should assess yourself for four types of stress signs: changes in body functions and physical health, changes in emotions and feelings, changes in behavior, changes in thoughts.

Once you know how to "tune in" your signs of stress, you will be better an able to analyze the situations that are stressful to you. These "stressors," as they are called, could be either external or internal.

- 1. External stressors:** are things and events outside your body that can make you feel threatened or out of control. For example: physical irritants like noise, pollution, heat, or humidity, work demands or conditions, frightening events, like narrowly escaping a traffic accident, social or family demands, changes or problems.
- 2. Internal stressors:** result from one's own attitudes and thinking patterns for example: do you always talk to yourself with words like "should, must, and ought?" Do you feel like a failure if you are late, or if things don't go as planned? Do you have "me last" syndrome, feeling you have to look after everyone else's needs before you think of your own? Do you feel worthless unless everyone likes you all the time? Are you guilty of "awful-izing," which means always expecting the worst? For example, if family members late, Do you often imagine they are injured or dead?

Now next question arises that how can we come to know that a student is under examination stress. They are many research findings which may help us to know these symptoms. These findings suggest following reactions as a symptoms of examinations stress:

- 1. Common physical reaction during exam preparations:** muscular tension, indigestion, sleeping difficulties, repaid, uneven or pounding heartbeat, frequent urge to pass urine, fast/shallow breathing, chest discomfort, change in appetite, constipation or diarrhea, backache etc.
- 2. Psychological reactions to stress:** feeling under pressure, frustration and aggression, feeling tense and unable to relax, feeling mentally drained out, fussy, gloomy or suspicious being constantly frightened or irritable, inability to concentrate or complete the task.

## II. STRESS MANAGEMENT

The teen stress should be dealt with both at home and outside home in school. There is a wrong notion among adults that there is no earthly reason for stress in teens. This should be avoided. The first step in tackling teen stress is to identify the signs and symptoms of stress in the teens. The teens should be allowed to talk freely about their problems. Parents and teachers should teach them stress relief methods. They should set only reasonable goals in both curricular and extracurricular activities. There are several treatments models to help the teens cope up with stress. The steps of one such model-Ask the teenager to define stress taking an example of an incident. Ask the teens about their response to that stressful event. Explain to the teens about normal stress response and ways of tackling stress. Identify the source of stress in teens and help them understand that the same event incites different responses in different persons. Teach the teen the best stress relieving techniques. Advise them to avoid unhealthy methods of tackling stress like aggression, avoidance etc.

Examination and interviews are undoubtedly situation, which call for stress. Every child goes through such situations and learns to cope up with stress arising out of them. They are also learnt by imitation of the parents or parent figures. Appearing for examination is one of very common situation, which an adolescent finds difficult of cope up with. Right approach and right coping strategies may stimulate and adolescent to overcome anxiety and maximize own performance in the examination. Stress is the body's response to any unpleasant situation. Anything can cause stress as long as it is perceived an unpleasant. However, some stressful event, such as a close contest in sport, can bring out the best in the people.

- 1. Eating Healthy:** Balancing food choices over time is what counts, breakfast provides the energy needed through an active morning, children who skip breakfast may have trouble concentrating, fast food supply more fat, salt and calories that good nutrition, fast food is moderation won't ruin a healthful diet, especially when consumed with green salads, replace finger chips with an apple, Add roughage to your diet-Dalia, corn etc. will help prevent stomach discomfort and you will feel lighter, the golden rule for food safety is to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold, parents should tech good habits by example.
- 2. Good sleep-good exam:** insomnia(The inability to fall are stay asleep) can be caused by stress and anxiety of exam, disturbances of 'sleep- wake' cycle during exams, if sleep struggles continue, talk them over with your doctor.
- 3. Exercise and physical activity:** walk or cycle fifteen minutes a day at least thrice a week, Avoid sitting cross- legged on the ground because this is bad for your knees, avoid being a couch potato, cut out junk food and control your weight, Swim or play a sport at least twice a week.

- 4. Mind Games to Play and Think about:** develop systematic problem – solving skills. How do you do that?, identify the stressful situation, define it as an objective, a problem that can be solved, brainstorm solutions- think of all the possible options but don't evaluate them. Anticipate the possible outcomes of each solution. Choose a solution and act on it.
- 5. The Must do's for Students:** knows your concentration span, study with breaks, work out best time for concentration, Group study for difficult subjects, Do Not let pervious results discourage you-identify your weak areas from previous exams and work on them, Time management plan must be made for all subjects, Choose a study place with minimum distractions and auto suggest to yourself about your resolution, Try to coincide study time with the time, you would be giving an exam, in case of average achievers, master what you know and are comfortable with, for low achievers, master the essential information first, prioritize the work load. Give your best concentration time to the toughest subject, repeat your learnt work so the recall in exam in easy. Work not repeated or revised is easily forgotten; try to plane your revision time by drawing up a timetable. Build in time for the things you enjoy – like watching your favourite TV programme, going out with your friends, or going to play football in the park, Give yourself a few treats-pamper yourself with a long hot bath, or listen to your favourite CD for an hour after you have finished your revision, relax with what you know before the entering the exam hall, do not get anxious about the result-cross that bridge when you come to it-options await.
- 6. Active-study strategies:** When studying you can recite you could, Describe or explain aloud any topic in your own words, Teach or explain the information to someone else (or record into a tape recorder) or, Engage in simulation or role play. When studying, you can write you could, Make a chapter study Review Card (use an index card, include special vocabulary, main ideas, examples, key events and people, causes, result and so on), Make and use asset of flashcards (vocabulary and definition, math problems and solutions, questions and answers and so on), Make list of related information by categories (causes results, important event or concepts, main ideas examples, key people and so on and recite them, Draw a diagram, Map a sketch, or a chart; do this from memory and check your notes or books for accuracy, write questions you think will be on the test and recite the answers, create a mnemonic to remember, information (such as please excuse my dear aunt sally, used for order of operations in solving an equation – parenthesis – exponent – multiply – divide – add – subtract) Graphic Organizers: Graphic organizers and semantic maps (word maps) which offer a visual representation of ideas. When students organize and design these maps, they apply important analytical skills as they think about how ideas are interrelated. Abstract information is put into concrete and visual form which can be pictured in one's mind and more readily retrieved later. When studying, you can visualize you could-your eyes and "picture in your mind" any chart, diagram, word, map event, time period, scene, experiment or character (from a story) that you are trying to remember.
- 7. The Most Do's For Parents:** students can fail to do well if they fail to cope with stress. Parents should guide their children in planning, organizing and setting a time-table. To Avoid a Stress situation for the child the parents must provide right kind of motivation and a conducive environment. Help the child to develop self – discipline, self-direction, self-confidence and a sense of achievement. Just good schooling and tuition are not substitutes for emotional cushioning. Help the child in maintaining his confidence especially when he

seems discouraged by his dropping marks or grades. Do not displace your anxiety on the child. The achievement goals should be realistically set according to the child's capability. Do not mix academic issues with family conflicts. Praise your child when he does well. Encourage child's performance with positive statements like, "well done" "you can do better" rather than saying "that was not enough". Work out your child's schedule with him instead of nagging him. There could be learning problems. Do not harp on previous failures or results. Under achievement may be due to some children believing it is safer not to try than to try and fail. If achievement expectation are high then some children would prefer to be criticized for being lazy than being considered not good enough. Humour relieves tension so be light and humorous with the child. Try to gain your child's confidence and discuss his problems with him, help him to find a solution. Exams are not the end of the world. Accept that expectation for everyone to do well is unrealistic as many won't pursue this for long.

- 8. Prayer:** having faith in his grace and benevolence, relieves one from many stress busters like examination stress. Prayer makes us feel mentally secure and strong. Regular prayers act like a tonic to our mind and body.

### III. KEY MESSAGES

The 5 "A's" for controlling the exam stress: Acknowledging, Appreciating, Alleviating, Altering and Avoiding.

- 1. Acknowledge:** The stress and strain because everyone faces it. In everyday life, stress manifests as mental or physical tension, which you would rather not have, recognize stress as inevitable.
- 2. Appreciating:** what causes your stress? Then, instead of blaming yourself or failing of cope; you and up pinpointing the real problems and tackling that.
- 3. Alleviating:** The pressures is all about resorting to simple stress-busting techniques. Perhaps you have a calming visual to look at when you need a mental escape from your surroundings. Or you may relax your muscle before you go to sleep.
- 4. Altering:** Your lifestyle is the next step towards Exam stress. Once you've seen the benefits of relaxation, it will encourage you to develop more permanent ways of reducing stress. If stress continues to be persistent, either you haven't tried the major stress alleviating formulae or alternately your haven't kept them up long enough to deliver the needed result
- 5. Avoiding:** Last step is the toughest but also the most beneficial. You have to start avoiding stress building habits and burnouts. Avoid smoking – a serious stress builder exercise briefly but regularly, make an effort to maintaining a normal weight, eat regular balanced meals and get adequate sleep.

### IV. OBJECTIVES

There are following objectives.

1. To explore the effect of examinations stress on adolescents health.
2. To review the studies related to examination stress on adolescents health.

3. To estimate the effect of examination stress on adolescents health

## V.CURRENT STUDIES ON EXAM STRESS

Jernelov, hoglund, Axelsson, axen, Gronneberg, Grunewald, Stierna and Lekander(2009), have studied the effects of examination stress on psychological responses, sleep and Allergic symptoms in atopic and non-atopic students: Atopic students were worse off in aspects of psychological well-being and sleep, but displayed only partly stronger responses to a stressor compared to non-atopic students. In spite of a broad negative response to examination, allergic symptoms were not affected.

Esklocak, Gozen, Yapar, Tavas, Kilic and Eskiocak (2005), examined the Glutathione and free sulphhydryl content of seminal plasma in healthy medical students during and after exam stress: This study demonstrated that glutathione and free sulphhydryl levels in seminal plasma decreased in subject undergoing examination stress. Furthermore, poor sperm quality may be due to loss of glutathione and free sulphhydryl content of seminal plasma.

Kockar and Gencoz (2004), have examined the personality, social support, and anxiety among adolescents preparing for university entrance examinations in Turkey: The total sociotropy score and the total social support score predicted anxiety for females, whereas for males, anxiety was predicted by four variables, namely, achievements expectancy, concern over approval, social support from family, and social support from friends. Implications of these results were discussed.

Chiu, Susan, Chon, Alexa, and Kimball (2003) asserted the changes in the severity of acne vulgaris as affected by examination stress: Patients with acne may experience worsening of the disease during examinations. Furthermore, changes in acne severity correlate highly with increasing stress, suggesting that emotional stress from external sources may have a significant influence on acne.

Folkman, Susan, Lazarus, and Richard (1985), examined a study of emotion and coping during three stages of a college examination: Results show that for Ss as a whole, there were significant changes in emotions and coping (including the use of social support) across the 3 stages. Some Ss experienced seemingly contradictory emotions and states of mind during every stage of the encounter; Ss experienced both threat emotions and challenges emotions, reflecting ambiguity regarding the multifaceted nature of the examination and its meanings (especially during the anticipatory stage). Ss used combinations of most of the available forms of problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping at every stage. Problem-focused coping was more prominent in the anticipatory stage and distancing more prominent during the waiting stage. An analysis of selected appraisal and coping values, taking GPAs into account, explained about 48 percent of variance in threat and challenge emotions at the anticipatory stage. Including grade, 57 percent of the variance in positive emotions at outcome and 61 percent of negative emotions at outcome were explained.

## VI.CONCLUSIONS

Present study has the main objective to know the effect of examinations stress on adolescents' health. This study has adopted theoretical approach to explore the psychological developmental effect of examination stress. As present study states that examination stress is a psychological and physiological pressure among adolescents

and discuss various psychological and physical causes of stress and also describes about psychological and physical reactions of the stress on adolescents health. This paper throws light on various coping strategy to manage examination stress. To estimate the effect of examination stress many related studies have been analyzed. This paper findings states that the main effect of examination stress are lower performance in academic examinations, increases in perceived stress and emotional distress, in smoking and caffeine consumption, a decrease in healthy eating, emotional control, frequency and duration of physical activity, maintenance of household chores and self-care habits, attendance to commitments, and monitoring of spending, and a deterioration in sleep patterns and study habits, aspects of psychological well-being, biological changes like in immune system, secretion of hormones etc. Review of this paper suggests academics and exam schedules, more leisure time activities, better interaction with the faculty and proper guidance, advisory services and peer counseling at the campus could do a lot to reduce the stress.

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