



Students Scientific Conference

Daily Hassles

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INTRODUCTION

“The greatest weapon against stress is
our ability to choose one thought over another.”

(William James)

In my environment I have met a lot of tensed and nervous people, and I had always been interested in the causes of stress, the reason why it develops and particularly interested in how to help, cure or prevent it. This was the main force, why I chose the topic of my thesis STRESS. In my thesis I would like to highlight stress as a negative factor, and evaluate stressors and their impact. Furthermore I will define the concept of stress, and clarify events that can trigger stress, known as stressors. My intention is to point out in greater detail the topic of work related stress, especially work stressors. I will discuss task and role-related stressors in the hierarchy within the organization (company). In connection with the stress at work, I would like to draw attention not only to the mental and physical state the workers, but simultaneously outline the impact of work-related stress on the companies. I will present two types of coping with stress, and mention a couple of practical methods to cope with stress. With the help of a questionnaire I would like to illustrate the level of those completed the questionnaire, and highlight the fact that high stress levels most likely to lead to organ disease.

1. THE DEFINITION OF STRESS

1.1 The general concept of stress and Janos Selye's theory

The word "stress" is English origin, which means the voltage, pressure. This concept was mainly used in physics in which it was associated with external pressure. In the 20th century this phrase has been taken over by medicine. According to their interpretation stress can mean external conditions on to the body such as strong shocks or internal changes taking place in the body. Definition according to the American Medical Association, Stress is an effect that disturbs physical and mental state of the person. The introduction of the concept of stress is linked to Janos Selye. He defined it as the „non-specific response of the body to any demand of change.“¹ His theory suggests that you have to distinguish between good and bad stress. Good stress, also known as eustress, is the self-fulfillment stress. It triggered by activities that are important, or a new challenge for the individual. These stressors have strengthening effect on situations what are surmountable to us. For example, presenting a piano concert or winning a marathon. The artist becomes stressed, because the task is difficult. However when performing the task his skills will develop. Which subsequently help to handle stressful situations in the future. In contrast the bad stress, also known as harmful distress, discomfort. It can occur, if we can not use existing capabilities in coping with stressful events, or it is not possible to acquire new skills. Loss of balance, uncontrollable features. An example of this can be a monotonous work; where skills do not develop, partly because the current job does not require advanced skills nor we can utilize our plus skills. According to Selye the essence of stress is adaptation. Thus, the stronger the stress, the higher the required adaptability to the body.

1.2 Stressors

The factors that cause stress are called stressors. A stimulus becomes a stressor if the stress inducing event uncontrollable, unpredictable, so no preparatory process and it concerns the limits of our abilities which forms the negative of self image, thereby increasing the possibility of failure.

¹ Selye János: Stressz distressz nélkül

- uncontrollable: The mere belief that we are able to influence the particular event, brings the peace of mind . From the moment we no longer feel the power over an event and can not influence it we will feel more and more pressure and we will become more and more anxious.
- unpredictable: Partly, if an event is predictable, we have the opportunity for a preparatory process. We can think through what may be the outcome of a particular event, so we can prevent or reduce the impact of the unpleasant stimulus. On the other hand, by an event that we can think through, we calm down, because we know what can happen, and we feel safe. An unpredictable event can have particular stressor for people who due to their day by day work are exposed to it such as paramedics and police officers.
- touches the limits of our abilities: in connection with a specific stress-inducing event we already feel that we can not cope with it, we do not have the required capabilities. If you can not cope with it we experience the events as failure that shaped our self-image negatively.

Stressors include mental and physical origin, they can originate from our insides the from the outside world. Stress can trigger major life events, or an ordinary case. The stressors can be grouped based on different criteria. Grouped according to whether the event has already happened or will happen later, and in parallel, whether there is a chance to fight it. On this base we distinguish:

- permanent, irreversible "damages and losses"
- threats
- challenges, such as external stimuli, straining, which pose the potential for personal growth

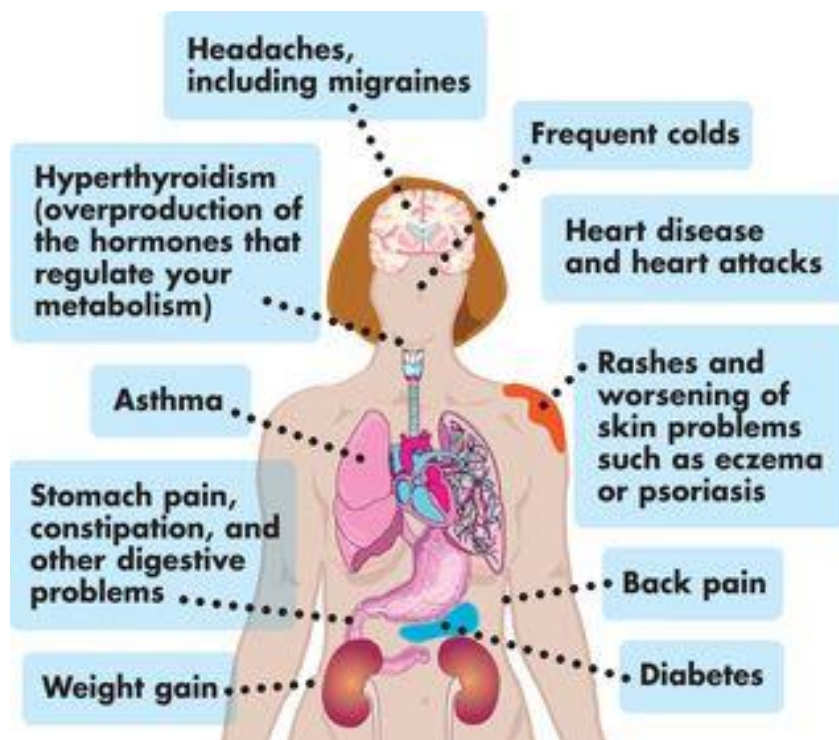
Another possible grouping criteria can be the impact of stimuli on the human body. As Mr. Selye found too little and over-stimulation can be equally stressors. Similar to standard theory of power level, according to which is too low and too high activation levels are both results in reduced quality performance.

1.3 Symptoms of a stress

Stress affects many parts of the body, and makes us more susceptible to physical and mental diseases. Under the influence of stress will be more adrenaline and more cortisol produced, which causing changes in heart rate, in blood pressure and in metabolic processes. If stress effect persists for a long time, occurs frequently or on the wrong time, it may cause a wide

variety of negative feelings. These negative feelings may include sweating, fatigue, weakness, or a period of excessive vigilance, numbness and much more physical symptoms. Stress can increase blood pressure, which will enhance the risk of myocardial infarction. Stress can also cause a variety of gastrointestinal diseases and worsen pre-existing ulcer as well. It can intensify asthma and other lung problems. Stress can cause many mental and emotional problems. A number of other symptoms can be clearly seen in the figure below.

Figure 1: Physical and Mental Symptoms of Stress



Sources: www.midwest-center.tumblr.com/page/25, date of download: 14.03.2016

1.4 Appearance of stress upon specific event ²

Each person is different and each person reacts differently to stress. Yet there are life events that trigger a similar level of stress in people whether it is good or bad event. Basically, the stress effects should be in balance with the stress handling ability of the person. However, there are events that are capable to eliciting high stress level in the majority of humans. Such events may include death, divorce or marriage, break-up, unemployment etc. Moreover, much of the following events can lead to high stress levels: such as pregnancy, child birth, retirement, confront serious illness of a family member, encountered financial problems.

² Családi orvoskalauz: A stressz

Generally speaking the higher the stress level an individual are exposed to in a given period of time, the more likely he or she will suffer physical or psychological damage. Events, such as family disputes, change in life conditions, initiating or completing school, change in job responsibilities, can provoke moderate stress. Finally, a few words on a low stress level events. These must not be neglected, because depending on the individual even a low level of stress can push the person out of balance. Such events may include a little debt, small change in school, introduction of new eating habits, start a diet or just to prepare for the holidays.

Figure 2: Stress events in pictures



Sources: google.com (own construction) date of download: 14.03.2016

1.5 Ability of stress tolerance

Too much stress can harm your health, can create obstacle to both work and social life. Due to the repeated and continuous stress it is difficult to overcome the factors that cause stress. How an individual respond to pressure depends on human character, components raised by the difficulties of life, as well as diseases. These are the features which will determine the individual's relationship within the family and in the workplace and how the person will handle a family issues or an emerging financial problems. In order to be able to live with the stress, we especially need to recognize the situations that give rise to stress. Stress tolerance partly inherited, partly developed. The essence of stress tolerance is to recognize the problem and overcome it. Later I will discuss methods that can reduce or even can stop the emerged stress.

2. WORKPLACE STRESS³

2.1 Workplace stressors

Work stressor is called the factors that cause stress for most people in the workplace, as well as a result of it. The law 1993 XCIII. was established to regulate stress at work. The law oblige the employer to do everything possible to avoid psychosocial risks related to work. Psychosocial risk mean the totality of effects (conflicts, work schedules, status of employment) an employee experience at work, which influence the responses given to this, and can be triggered by stress, work accident, possibly psychological disorders.

2.2 Work-related stressors task

All work has elements that may be stress sources for certain people. This includes quantitative or qualitative over- or underload. Quantitative overload occurs when a worker has been given too many task within a specified period of time. It is a growing phenomenon, for example, that a person who working in an eight-hour shifts are incapable to complete the task during the 8 hours but instead can execute it in 9-10 hours. Such an overload can lead to short-term physical and mental fatigue. Some studies have shown that the risk of heart attack is in relation to a person's weekly working hours. The opposite is quantitative underload. This is the case when the employees are bored because the tasks assigned to them doesn't ensure full-time employment, or when the employee must perform simple, routine work. In case of a qualitative overload the worker need to cope with too complicated tasks. This type of overload, according to some studies leads to decrease in self-esteem. The employer is obliged to provide the necessary tools to carry out the work. In the absence of appropriate working tools it might be difficult for the employees to carry out the work, which can become the source of stress. Another possible source of stress for the employee, if there is no right to have a say on work process and what tools to use, have no influence on work schedule. Stress can trigger working conditions for instance when you have to work in dangerous conditions, work in shifts or on the weekends. One of today's typical stressor a rapidly changing world. These changes have an impact on work, because nowadays most work can be performed with machines. Besides to the above mentioned work stressors, we also need to name deadlines, fatigue resulting from physical work, or from overtime work.

³Juhász Ágnes: Munkahelyi stressz, munkahelyi egészségfejlesztés

2.3 Hierarchy and stress in workplace

In this chapter we distinguish stressors arises at individual level and at group level. First, I'll give details of the stressors that appear on the individual level. Sometimes the workers do not have adequate information regarding their work. This is what we call role ambiguity. In this case, the work goals are unclear for the individual, he is uncertain about the expectations of the staff regarding his role, precarious about the area that his responsibility covers. Another case in which employees opinions collide, it is called conflict role. It is also a potential source of role conflict when a person has to perform a task, what he does not want to do or he himself did not feel part of the job. It can be stressors for someone with too much responsibility for the promotion or even the dismissal of other employees. In contrast to this it is also a possible stressors when someone performs a very precise work, but for every step you need the approval of the supervisor. On the Group level I would like to highlight three stressors. One is the lack of cohesion. To get a working group be operational cohesion is needed. Greatly complicates the job when in a working place employees instead of helping to each other, they work against each other. Problems may arise from the fact that the staff are not on good terms. Poor working relationship exists where there is little trust, insignificant support and interest of the problems toward others. Considered as a special case of conflicts within the group the so-called psycho-terror. This conflict is a process in which some were harassed, abused, hurt over a longer period of time.

2.4 The effects of work-related stress for the company ⁴

Peter Nesztinger, the head of the Ministry of Economy Labour Inspection Department in a press conference in 2015 he made the following findings public. The number of workplace accidents in 2014 increased by 14 percent. This expressed in numbers 19661 workplace accidents were recorded in 2014, of which 78 had fatal outcome. In addition, the employees were absent from work up to 21.5 million days. According to an EU survey, more than half of this absenteeism is due to stress at work. According to the Eurobarometer figures it costs the EU 136 billion euros per year mainly in the corporate sector, since about 50-60 percent of the underlying illnesses and lost working days are due to stress and its negative health consequences. In Hungary, nearly HUF 440 billion losses identified within the enterprises, due to workplace generated and poorly managed stress.

⁴ <http://24.hu/fn/gazdasag/2015/06/15/szazmilliardos-karokat-okoz-a-munkahelyi-stressz/>

In Europe, current surveys show that a third of employers have processes that are suitable to narrowing the psychosocial risks. In Hungary the National Labour Office in collaboration with the National Focal Point has launched a campaign Titled as "Healthy Workplace - Manage your stress!" This methodology campaign intended to provide methodological assistance to companies in developing appropriate stress management practices. Surveys conducted earlier by the European Agency states that following occupational accidents, work-related stress is the second largest risk factor.

At EU level, this affects 56 million workers, about 1.1 million people in Hungary could be affected directly. The Member States of the European Union spend an average of 4 percent of the GDP per year, the Hungarian government and employers spent about HUF 880 billion as compensation for accidents at work and occupational diseases.

3. STRESS CONTROL METHODS

The process by which a person attempts to defeat suffered stress, is called coping. There are two main forms of coping. One of the form is when a person focuses on the situation, try to avoid or change it in the future. This process is called Problem-focused coping. The second form called emotion-focused coping, in this case the person is trying to ease the emotional reactions associated with stress inducing situation.⁵ The most important step to overcome stress is to recognise the problem. The fact that we can determine what is causing the tension, what change to make, understand the impact of stress and how to minimize its effect. One way to overcome stress is to include sport, physical activity into your daily routine. Regular exercise, for instance aerobic, while ensuring the body's health and fitness, improves the state of mind as well. Exercises for the buttock and arm muscles are stimulate the "pleasure hormone production," thereby increases our good mood. Keep in mind when making the choice of sports to choose a form of exercise that you enjoy, and you may want it for a long time, as part of your life. Relaxation is also an important method to overcome stress. Relaxation techniques are meant to promote the development of physical and mental balance. Relaxation relieves tension and creates calmness. Generally 30 minutes are the daily recommended time spans. The duration can be increased depending on our stress level. There are many treatment and relaxation techniques, which serve to relieve stress. The well-known method is meditation and yoga. Meditation is effectively influences the heart rate, breathing, migraines, and high blood pressure.

⁵ Rita L. Atkinson – Richard C. Atkinson– Edward E. Smith–Daryl J. Bem – Susan Nolen-Hoeksema: Psychology

In parallel with this meditation can reduce tenseness and anxiety. Yoga includes postural exercises that improve body condition. Yoga techniques help us to better understand our body, our body's functions and its reactions. With the help of these techniques, we will be able to deal with the stress affecting us. In addition to the exercises, conscious breathing also plays an important role. Gasping breath is an unquestionable sign of nervousness and tension. Conscious breathing is easy to learn and very effective under stress. The steady breathing automatically reduces the level of stress hormones. One of the most effective type of breathing in stress situation is relaxed breathing.

Furthermore our diet is also very important. Some foods specifically have stress-reducing effect such as spinach. Spinach helps the production of dopamine, which is basically a pleasure inducing compound. The greater the dopamine production the higher our peace of mind. According to a survey, those who consume large amounts of spinach are usually much more energetic and happier. Another similar dish is salmon. The salmon contains lot of omega-3 fatty acids, which can compensate for the effects of adrenaline and cortisol, produced under stress. A US study found that omega-3 fatty acids can help reduce anxiety by 20 percent. The physical condition and fitness levels imply to protection and reduce stress level. However, the biggest focus is on how we respond to stress. In particularly our attitudes, our perceptions and our intelligence will determine the extent to which stress affects us.

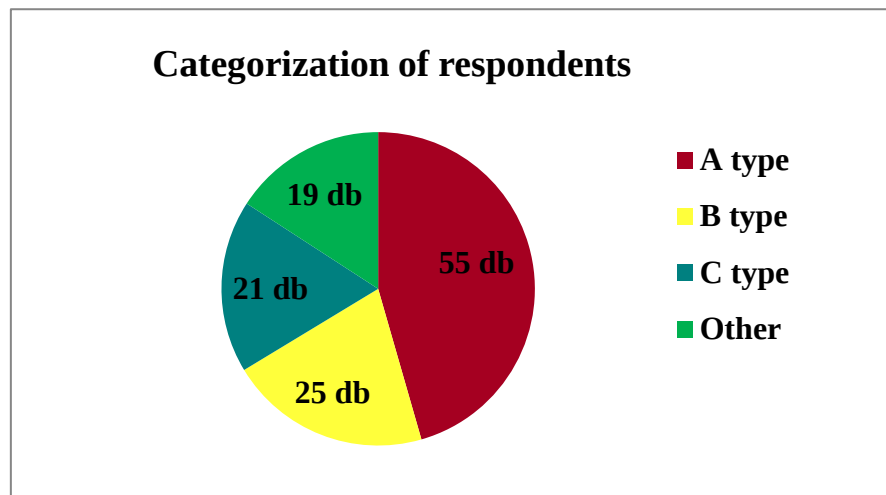
The stress reductions are the so-called "golden rules" such as:

- Think ahead, try to figure out how to avoid difficulties.
- Let's share our concern with family and friends.
- Try to develop a wider circle of friends.
- If necessary, divert your attention to pleasant thing.
- Do not pile up things in yourselves.
- Provide enough free time to yourselves.
- Relax and insert a brief rest for the day.

4. THE RESEARCH

120 responses were received to the questionnaire, which is sufficient to draw a general conclusions. The gender distribution of respondents are the following 35 male and 85 female. 75% of respondents are between 19-35 years old. The first chart illustrates well the proportions of the various categories.

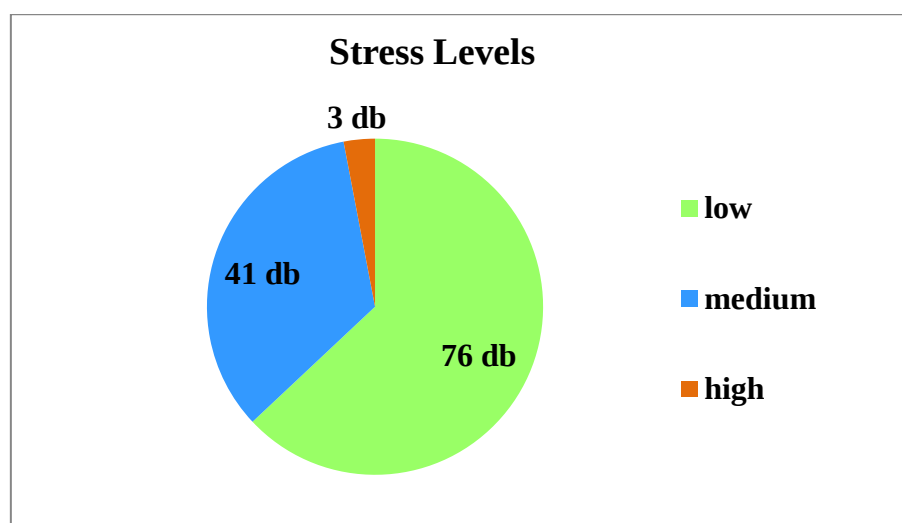
Diagram 1: Categorization of respondents



The 120 respondents, 55 persons belong to category A type. In case of pressure or stress they mainly experience cardiovascular symptoms. The symptoms can include high blood pressure, chest pain, impaired concentration and abnormal heart rhythms.

From the remaining 65 respondents, 25 people belong to the type B. The stress for this group can result in the appearance of digestive problems. Stomach cramps, abdominal pain and eating disorders may occur. Other 21 individuals were categorized as type C. For this group typically, bone and musculoskeletal problems may occur, as well as physical stress. Finally, it was not possible for 19 people to define specific type of category, on the basis of their score they belong to several groups. Probable these people under stress will experience all the characteristics described in the three different groups.

Diagram 2: Stress Levels



Based on the second chart more than half of the respondents exactly 63 percent exposed to low-level stress. It is a striking fact that such a considerable amount of people enjoy low or average levels of stress. These individuals have no reason for concern, since this basically negligible stress on them just as much as necessarily arises during our daily activities. Another possibility to achieve this level, if the individual even under stress can manage stress situation properly. The remaining 41 respondents reached medium stress level. Individuals in this group are recommended to pay attention to those events, situations which gave rise to stress. In case the source of the stress has been identified, we need to think about how it can be reduced, and if it is possible eliminate it entirely.

The 3 level includes 3 people. For them it is recommended to visit a specialist. This level of stress prevails over man, there will be no remarkable chance to cope with it alone.

5. SUMMARY

Not by chance that stress is called epidemic of the 21st century. Stress is the most common problem these days, more and more people have to deal with. My study represents several methods by which stress can be managed. One of the most important thing is to recognize the problem in time and seek appropriate help. It is important to understand that stress effect depends on how we respond to it. We all have the ability to develop resistance against stress, which will results in less stressful situation in the future. Due to the extent of the theme and because of the limitation on the extension of the study I will give more details of my research over work-related stress on an other occasion, supported with a questionnaire.

However as it is expressed so far, it is significant that within a company not only the employer but also the employees are aware of the responsibility regarding health and safety. Therefore the employer's actions should meet the obligations and create ideal conditions for the workers. The worker must take himself and his companions into account. In order to be operational a company should exclude as many stressors as possible. Recently, more and more enterprises have a personal staff, who monitors the psychological state of the employees and if necessary they lend support. Particular attention should be paid to those events that provoke large amount of stress. Such events may include for example death, a serious illness, or termination of employment capability.

In my opinion, people in all areas of life have to learn to live and deal with stress, all of us should learn to recognize stress symptoms in time and seek help in case we find it difficult to handle the case.

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FULL QUESTIONNAIRE

Stress questionnaire

Welcome!

My name is Alexandra Vitáris. I am a second-year student at SZIU Faculty of Economics, Agriculture and Health Studies in Bekescsaba. The topic of my thesis is the stress and I would like to ask you to help me with filling out this questionnaire. Thank you for your help!

Your gender:

☐ Female

☐ Male

Your age:

☐ Under 18 years

☐ 19-25

☐ 26-35

☐ 36-45

☐ 46-59

☐ Over 60 years

Your highest level of education:

☐ Primary School

☐ Grammar School

☐ Secondary School

☐ University / College

Which statement apply to your personal? (Between six possible degrees 6 (often) and 0 (never))

	0	1	2	3	4	5
In myself I am anxious and nervous.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In mornings I wake up completely broke.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have no appetite.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I'm in trouble because of so many things what's waiting for me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is hard for me to breathe.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My nape, my shoulder and my back hurt.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I get tired physically quickly.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am careless and forgetful.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have stomach and digestive complaints.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is hard for me to concentrate for one thing.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In my chest I am feeling sliting or pain.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is hard to sleep for me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have the feeling that I quickly lose the overview over things.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sometimes it comes to me all of a sudden palpitations, or my heart comes to be pierced.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Complete relaxation is hard for me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have cold hands and feet.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have heartburn.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
While I am working "I am dreaming".	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel myself physically tense.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When I am lifting heavy weight, my arms and legs will be trembling.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I'm too sweaty.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Have days, when my memory is bad.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My muscles are twitching and cramping.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Have days, when I have no any good idea.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐