

Title- “STRESS A PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTOR FOR ALL DISORDERS”-
SCOPE OF HOMOEPATHY.

Abstract- Stress is a common psychological state occurs due to failure in achieving a task in day to day life. Due to modernization, world is becoming more demanding & complexity in life of an individual. Frustration leads to conflict resulting in stress when encountered with difficult phases of life. The purpose of this article is to provide an outline about stress, its factors, types, mechanism, disorders and coping along with homoeopathic management.

Key words- stress, homoeopathy, coping, psychology.

Introduction- Stress is a psychological reaction which is resultant of our body's response to any threat when we experience challenges to our physical or emotional wellbeing exceeding our coping resources & abilities.

Hans selye stated, “stress is the spice of life, the absence of stress is death”.

Stress can develop from frustration because continuous failures make a change in the behavior of a person. Maladjustment to certain situations leads to conflict. When the person faces continuous stressful events make him unable to cope up or overcome from that pressure leading to suffering of the individual. If the distress is more the psychological well being will be poor.

Stressors are the stimuli causing serious damage to the body when failed to cope with the stress. They are classified into two categories.

- I. **External/ environmental stressors-** Eg- earth quakes, floods, fire accidents, death of loved ones, financial loss, terrorist attacks,

robbery, communal violence, criticism, mutual rivalries, clashes, struggles, frustration in family and working places.

II. Internal / psycho-physiological stressors-

“Type A” personality people are more prone & susceptible to stress. Persons with very weak psyche & damaged self confidence, little stress tolerance capacity, unhappiness, frustrations, alcoholism, drug addiction.

Factors affecting stress are:- Degree of disruption it causes on human body can be measured by-

- Importance of situation.
- Duration.
- Having number of stress.
- How much severity of the stress?
- How much it impacts our lives?
- How expected it is?
- How much control over the situation?
- Imminence of anticipated stress.
- Unfamiliarity or suddenness of problem.
- Strength & equality of conflicting forces.
- Perception of the problem.
- Degree of threat.
- Stress tolerance of the individual.

Types of stress-

- I. **Positive stress/ Eustress-** Pleasant stress beneficial to individual, creates positive thinking, motivation.
- II. **Negative stress/ distress-** Unpleasant stress damages the body. It is one of the silent killers.

Effects of stress – There will be a response from the body’s regulatory systems when exposed to stress.

Changes in the body	Immediate effects	Long term effects
Behavioural	Nervousness, smoking, overeating, helplessness exhaustion, paralysed thinking, restlessness, sleeping disorders, alcoholism, panic attacks.	Obesity, forgetfulness alcoholism, drug addiction.
Physiological	Increased muscle tone, changes in heart rate & blood pressure, indigestion, constipation.	Decreased immunity, migraine, ulcers, hypertension, heart disease, skin disease.
Emotional	Anger, fear, jealousy, hatred, anxiety, depression, restlessness, decreased sexual activity, social withdrawal.	Chronic anxiety, depression, fears & phobias, personality changes, mental illness.
Cognitive	Decreased concentration, increase distractibility.	Obsessive thoughts, sleep disorders, memory problems.

Epidemiological surveys all over the world have proven that stress related diseases are increasing day by day. Most of the psychiatric cases result from stressful life events. Psychologically there will be abnormality in thinking, negative emotions, self-devaluation, self-criticism, guilt, inferiority which creates an obstacle in achieving a goal makes him developing anxiety, depression, anger, and other mental illness along with physical conditions such as obesity, heart diseases, diabetes, asthma, gastrointestinal problems, skin diseases.

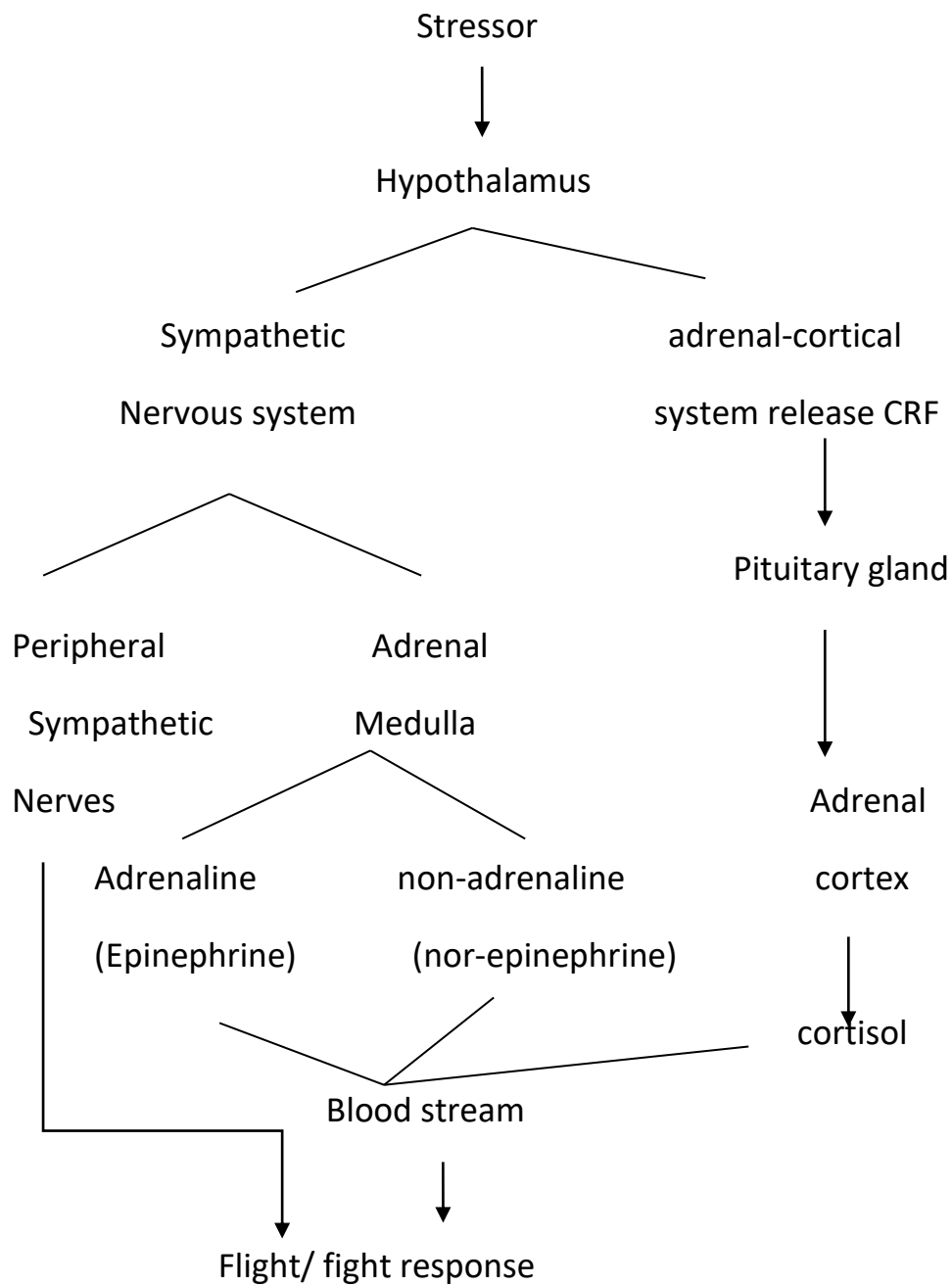
Emotional stress may interfere with body's immune system leading to certain disorders like rheumatoid arthritis, migraine, allergies, heart diseases, depression, anxiety disorders, endocrine disorders, musculoskeletal disorders. Mental stress raises blood pressure, elevation in hormones, reduces blood supply to heart leading to death.

The response to stressful events has an emotional response with physical complaints, a coping strategy and a defence mechanism.

- **Emotional & somatic response –**
 - ✓ **Anxiety response** with autonomic arousal leads to irritability, dry mouth, tachycardia, apprehension & increased muscle tension.
 - ✓ **Depressive response** with pessimistic thinking & reduced physical activity.

- **Coping strategies-** The individuals can cope up with it when they get social & moral support either from family, religious rituals & from medical facilities. They reduce the impact of stressful events.
 - **Problem solving strategies** -includes seeking help from others, obtaining information/ advice, confrontation & dealing by making plans.
 - **Emotion reducing strategies-** includes ventilation of emotion, evaluating, avoidance and positive reappraisal of problem.
 - **General coping strategies-** inhibition of action, turning to others, direct - action response, intra psychic/ palliative coping.
 - **Formal coping strategies-** information providing technique, bio-feedback technique, relaxation technique, modelling technique, systemic desensitization, cognitive- restructuring technique.
 - **Maladaptive coping strategies-** include use of alcohol/drugs, self-injury/self-harm, aggressive behaviour & unrestrained display of feelings.
- **Defence mechanisms-** They are unconscious responses to internal conflict and external stressors. Most frequent are displacement, projection repression, denial & regression.

Mechanism on body- When the stressful situations persists for longer time which turns into distress causing suffering of an individual resulting into more distress, unhappiness & sorrow.



If the flight/fight response is not inhibited when the stressors are still acting then damage occurs to hippocampus in long term exposure. The HPA –axis will be in active state releasing cortisol production which further damage brain cells. Stress may also affect the immune system causing slow healing, behavioural changes, premature aging and more susceptible to mental illness.

Stress disorders- They are classified as follows:

❖ **Acute stress reaction (F43.0)-**

According to **ICD-10**, A transient disorder which develops without any mental disorder in response to sudden intense stressors may subside within hours / days. **DSM-4**, It states that onset occurs during/ after exposure to distressing event & may last for at least 2 days and for not more than 4 weeks.

Symptoms include initial state of daze, inability to comprehend, amnesia, insomnia, palpitations, sweating, tremors, restlessness, anxiety, depression, disorientation, agitation, flight reaction.

❖ **Post traumatic stress disorder-(F43.1)-**

According to **ICD-10**, It is a delayed/ protracted response to stressful event (short/ long lasting like sexual & physical assault, natural disaster, witnessing crime, violent death of loved ones) of an exceptionally threatening/ catastrophic nature. Onset ranging from few weeks to months (rarely exceeds 6 months). It may show a transition in some patients to an enduring personality change.

Symptoms include hyperarousal, insomnia, anxiety, depression, fear, irritability, poor concentration, sudden flashbacks, numbness, recurrent distressing dreams, avoidance, detachment, nightmares, emotional blunting, aggression, difficulty in recalling, excessive use of alcohol/drugs, suicide.

❖ **Adjustment disorder-(F43.2)-** They are usually interfering with social functioning & performance which are arising in period of adaptation to stressful changes in person's life. Onset usually within 1 month of occurrence of that event & does not exceed 6 months.

Symptoms include anxiety, worry, poor concentration, depression, irritability, palpitations, tremors, aggression, misuse of drugs, diminished performance.

Assessment of stress-

Perceived stress scale is a psychological instrument which is widely used to measure the level of stress encountered in one person's life about stressful situations.

General management-

- a. Laughter with open heart & mind is the best medicine.
- b. Utilization of time properly.
- c. Facing the problems boldly very often gains confidence.
- d. Avoiding excess desires & aspirations & learning how to control them.
- e. One should be aware of his own limitations & scope while interacting with others.
- f. Must not find fault with everything & anything.
- g. Pleasing everybody is impossible. So do not try to please others for mental well being of an individual.
- h. Exercises like breathing, yoga, walking, swimming & meditation reduces stress levels.
- i. Avoid negative thinking as much as possible & cultivate positive thinking.
- j. Knowledge of how to ignore others & letting go, how to say 'no' gently to others helps in gaining mental peace.
- k. Adjustment to environment & situations relieve stress.
- l. Proper diet & regimen with green vegetables & fruits.

Management with Homoeopathy-

Stress is a good thing which keeps us alive , healthy and motivated always to bring out good outcome from within every being. It may not be the same for every person. As everyone are unique in their own personality, perception, dealing with the situations depends on different state of suffering level. Some people may find little stress also intolerable, vice versa some people are strong enough even if they face so many stressful situations. One person differs in many ways with one another.

Homoeopathy system carries an excellent scope to help a person manage stress. It works on a deep psychological level which help in building stamina to cope with day to day stresses of life. A well selected medicine can gently stimulate natural healing forces of body to bring about health taking into consideration the individual's spiritual, mental, emotional and physical well being.

Hahnemann , Father of Homoeopathy states in 6 th edition of Organon in aphorism 225 ,that mental diseases arising from prolonged emotional causes such as continued anxiety, worry, vexation, wrong and frequent occurrence of great fear and fright .(i.e. psycho-somatic type) are primarily psychological in origin .They are to be treated by construction of complete picture of disease with previous corporeal disease and its present indistinct remnants along with present symptom of mind and disposition. Antipsoric medicine has to be given based on the totality of symptoms. Thus vitality of a person is restored by treating ill effects of stress.

Some rubrics from Kent Repertory :

- Mind - Anxiety- business about, change, at any sudden, conscience , anger during, domestic affairs during pregnancy, excitement from, family about his, future about, mental exertion from.
- Mind - Worry – ailments from , sleeplessness, others about, business/ work.
- Mind -Apprehension

Some rubrics from Synthesis Repertory :

- Mind –stressed children in , evening.
- Mind –tension, mental.
- Mind- anxiety – ailments from, asthma with, bad days are approaching,that, career about, driving from place to place, household matters about.

Some of the remedies are proven benefit as follows:

- 1) **Aurum Metallicum-** Despairing depression, commonly caused by business loss/ personal failure of some sort. Difficulty expressing anger. Feels worthless. Everything seems black. Lacks self-confidence. Gloomy. Blames self. Emotional stresses like betrayal, depression, failure, guilt, loneliness, loss, shame. Least contradiction excites his wrath. Melancholy with inquietude & desire to die.
- 2) **Aconite Napellus-** Anxious with fear, before an exam/interview. Panic. Restless. Excitable. Claustrophobic. Screaming with pain due to sensitive

to it. Emotional stresses like fear, shock, worry. Physical stresses like getting chilled, shock after injury, cold dry wind.

- 3) **Anacardium Orientale**- Suffering from nervous exhaustion as a result of overstudy or exam nerves, lacks self confidence. Emotional stresses like transition, worry.
- 4) **Ignatia** - Emotional stresses like criticism, disappointment, guilt, homesickness, humiliation, loneliness, loss, reprimand, shame, shock. Depressed from unexpressed grief. Introspective. Sentimental. Dislikes consolation & contradiction. Idealistic.
- 5) **Lachesis**- Emotional stresses like depression, jealousy. Blames others, abusive, excitable, vindictive. Ailments from long lasting grief, fright, sorrow, disappointed love. Religious insanity.
- 6) **Lycopodium Clavatum**- Emotional stresses like bullying, fear, humiliation, transitions, worry. Claustrophobic. Dictatorial. Easily embarrassed & offended. Lack of self confidence. Cannot take new responsibilities.
- 7) **Nitric Acid**- Emotional stresses like conflict, resentment. Anxious about their health. Unforgiving.
- 8) **Nux Vomica**- Emotional stresses like boredom, conflict, criticism, failure, humiliation, mental strain, shame, worry. Mischievous, quarrelsome, stubborn, impulsive, impatient, irritable.
- 9) **Sulphur** – Emotional stresses like boredom, embarrassment, fear, transitions. Discontented, bites fingernails, claustrophobic, irritable, stubborn, untidy.
- 10) **Zincum Metallicum**- Suffering from nervous exhaustion by mental strain as emotional stress.

Conclusion-

Though stress is a physiological reaction of our body's response to any change, threat, pressure from outside forces which keeps us alive & healthy. Distress may precipitate other psychiatric disorders also.(eg-depression, anxiety, schizophrenia) in long term exposure. Homoeopathy plays important role in managing adverse effects of stress with remedies like ignatia, sulphur, aconite, lycopodium & many more which are selected by accurate

interpretation of the case history with appropriate rubrics using repertory for differentiation of drugs.

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