

Stress around the world

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Stress is a universal human experience since the beginning of time, for life is not perfect and every single person has to face some difficult time one way or another. Although the exact causes of stress may be different from one person to another and at one time or another for the same person, the general effects of stress on people are quite similar.

Stress has been shown to negatively affect the body both physically and psychologically. When a person experiences stress, his body is essentially responding to an outside distortionary force. A stress reaction can change a person's reaction time, strength, and concentration. However, consistent exposure to stress has a large array of negative effects on the body.

Becoming more vulnerable to illnesses, aches throughout the body, and moodiness are just a few examples of what stress does to the body. There are many factors that contribute towards stress, and these may quite different for people from different countries and cultures around the world.

There can be also cultural, geographical, and economical differences that separate the causes of stress within a given country. Although there will definitely be overlap between them in terms of the sources of stress, a person's country and culture play major roles in developing one's stress tendencies. A person's country and culture can have an influence on the type and level of stress that she or he experiences. Stress has an enormous impact on health, mainly categorized into physical and psychological groups. Physical effects of stress include recurring pain, vulnerability to illnesses, and less energy throughout the day. Some common psychological behaviors after experiencing stress are becoming extremely moody, loss of interest, and eventually depression.

(Smith, Stress Symptoms, Signs, and Causes) The reason that stress is seen as a chronic issue is because all of these negative symptoms usually only occur after a person has become exposed to stress for a long period of time. The initial stress response is actually a naturally occurring system within the human body that reacts to a situation that the body deems to be stressful. This short term response leads to a temporary increase in reaction time, concentration, and strength. During this allotted time period, the stress is actually beneficial to the body. for it is enabling the person to perform their task more efficiently.

However, this reaction should not always be occurring, and the problem surfaces when people are stressed for days on end. (McLeod, What is the Stress Response?) Each and every person experiences the stress response, and essentially everyone goes through chronic stress as well, although some more than others. Although the aftereffects of stress are similar for everyone, the causes of stress can differentiate immensely. There are many different countries throughout the world that have different geographic attributes. Depending on the country's location on the Earth, the people of that country are more inclined than others to experience an event such as a natural disaster. An example of this would be Nepal.

(Stout, The Nepal Earthquakes Are Now the Nation's Deadliest-Ever Disasters) Countries with a higher chance of earthquakes will definitely have a population that is more stressed out by natural disasters in general. People who never experience a natural disaster won't have this specific type of influence on their stress. (<http://www.apa.org/topics/disasters/>) As a result, people who have experienced natural disasters are more likely to have more <https://assignbuster.com/stress-around-the-world/>

experience with a loss of shelter, or even family. Inhabitants of California are also stressed out due to their geographical location.

California's situation is definitely less life-threatening than Nepal's, for a drought does not compare with an earthquake in terms of initial danger.. However, the lack of water in California is definitely stressing out its citizens. (Dokoupil, Not One Drop: How Long Will California Survive Without Water?) Depending on an individual's situation, a person in California may even be more stressed out than a person from Nepal. One of the primary reasons that stress is such a huge problem is that people simply accept it into their lives. It becomes a chronic issue, and the victim does not even realize it.

This is the reason as to why a citizen from California may be more inclined to have stress related issues. The drought in California has been going on for many years, and people are undergoing stress everyday and adjusting their lifestyle to the stress. The stress of a drought can also be seen as more never-ending, for a person is coping with the stress every day. A person in Nepal who suddenly suffered the loss of a home from an earthquake may not experience much long term stress, depending on when their house was rebuilt. This does not necessarily mean that a person from one country will definitely be more or less stressed than a person from another. A person's experience with handling stress, as well as the direness of their situation all play a role in how stressed they become.

Geographical factors aside, socioeconomic status plays a large role in the causes of a person's stress as well. Countries that are not as developed will have a higher proportion of people who are under stress for economic

reasons. This can apply to certain parts of the United States, for different parts of the US are more affluent than others. People in poverty can be stressed out because they cannot pay their bills or even get enough food to eat every day. But a person from a more affluent family with no worries about money would be stressed out by other factors. A study about the relationship between socioeconomic status and unhealthy behaviors found that the lower a person's status, the higher their psychological distress.

(Lazarino, The Associations Between Unhealthy Behaviours, Mental Stress, And Low Socio-Economic Status In An International Comparison Of Representative Samples From Thailand And England) A person with lower socioeconomic status generally has more to worry about, for they have lesser paying jobs, and may perhaps be less educated than one with a higher status. A lesser education may indirectly affect a person's health as well. Someone who has not learned about all of the health risks of certain activities, such as drugs and alcohol, is definitely more prone to becoming unhealthy, thus leading them to a more stressed out lifestyle. The differences in culture account for different causes of stress as well. One primary factor that sets a country's culture apart from another is its education system.

According to the Center on International Education Benchmarking, China is one of the top performing countries when it comes to test scores. The United States is not on this list at all. In America, education is an important factor of a student's typical daily life. However, students in America also have many other priorities, such as sports. The nature of the Chinese education system places education above all else.

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America has a form of college-entrance tests in the SAT, ACT, and even AP tests. (<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/testing/the-real-role-of-tests-in-your-college-application>) These play a large role in regards to getting into a high level college, but these tests pale in comparison to China's one test. Each and every course eventually leads up to one test in a student's final year of high school, and their entire career hinges on their score on this test.

Naturally, this raises the stress level of all the students immensely, which may be why Chinese students score so much higher than other countries. (<http://www.ncee.org/programs-affiliates/center-on-international-education-benchmarking/top-performing-countries/shanghai-china/>) Due to the education system, students are not the only ones stressed. Teachers are monitored by government officials, and their ability to teach the students well can play a role in their salary. China also has a system in which they switch around principals to different schools.

If a principal has already made his/her mark on a high-performing school, they will be transferred to a lower-performing one to improve its scores. With both the students and teachers facing a colossal amount of pressure as a result of the heavy emphasis of education in Chinese culture, China's performance on tests as a country outscores many. (<http://www.ncee.org/programs-affiliates/center-on-international-education-benchmarking/top-performing-countries/shanghai-china/>) Education is not the only aspect that differentiates cultures apart. In South Korea, a negative stigma is attached to seeking psychiatric assistance.

Seeking assistance is often considered a weakness and can make the person feel shameful. This heavily discourages people from seeking help, and thus increases the suicidal rate in that country. In comparison, the United States is the opposite. People are not judged for seeking treatment, and they are actually encouraged to get help if they believe that it is needed. In the US, counseling is offered at schools, and there are many hotlines that a student can call if they are feeling distressed.

(Kim, South Korea's Struggle With Suicide) Stress is a consistent problem today that affects all sorts of people, no matter their age, culture, or social and economic status. Stress can have both positive and negative effects on people. Moderate and occasional stress or pressure can help people cope with on sudden situation. However, the constant exposure to high level of stress is extremely unhealthy and damaging to the body in countless ways. Psychologists are researching methods that can assist in managing, and thus reducing stress levels in people. However, the differentiating causes and effects of stress across different countries and cultures make this a task extremely hard.

Stress has to be handled on individual basis, depending on the causes and specific situation. On the other hand, lessons can be learned from different cultures on how to better manage stress. If more research is done on the specific causes of stress, and patterns are found in what stresses out people in specific areas of the world, the problem of stress will be able to be broken down into parts. People with too much stress can learn how to cope with it more efficiently, which will in return increase their life expectancy in the long run. From a different perspective, countries that desire to have higher

performing students may want to change their culture to have a higher standard of achievement.

Even though stress generally is considered negative, small amounts of stress are beneficial. If every country can learn how to teach their students how to manage their stress, and turn it into something positive, a majority of the world's population may live longer, happier lives, and attain a higher level of education. Thus, the study of stress is extremely important, for proper utilization and management can lead to positive benefits for everyone across the world.