

# Literature review on what are the health and emotional implications of stress

[Health & Medicine](#), [Stress](#)



## **Among International Students?**

Today in the conditions of fast-changing world and ever-increasing body of knowledge that international students face every day, the problem of stress management becomes more and more important and topical. There is a common belief that stress is harmful for every person, and in this paper I want to focus on the implications of stress for emotions and health of international students in particular.

Stress - is a reaction of body to the psychological or physical intervention, which violates its usual rhythm. From the point of view of psychology, physiology, and medicine it is possible to distinguish not only the negative form of stress, but also positive. Positive form lied in two senses: minor stress, mobilizing body; stress caused by positive emotions (Brougham et al., 2009).

The entire benefit of these forms of stress is that the body can deal with it. The essence of the negative form of stress is the fact that body cannot handle it. As a result, it reduces resistance of the immune system, destroying health and can easily lead to serious diseases. Stress has harmful biological effects on the body either through physical means or psychological. The immune system is very quick to respond to our thoughts and emotions (Collins, Coffey and Morris, 2010).

The most interesting thing here is that most of our stress is not related to external circumstances - it is largely related to our inability to control ourselves (Giancola, Grawitch and Borchert, 2009). In our struggle with stress our personal characteristics and self-control are more important than the stress itself.

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There are several psychological theories related to stress, and in here one of them will be considered - the one developed by William James and Carl Lange in 1880s. According to it, stress and emotions are correlated in such a way that emotions do not at once succeed perception of a stressor or stressful situation, but they are present after the body responds to stress (Suldo, Shaunessy and Hardesty, 2008). It means that emotional behavior is impossible to be manifested unless it is connected to a person's brain.

So, what could be the effects of stress? First of all, it is decrease of the immune system functions that makes us more susceptible to viral infections, colds, and periodic attacks of herpes (Bayram and Bilgel, 2008). If we turn to medicine again, it is possible to discuss how stress contributes to development of infectious diseases. The surface of our mucous membranes (mouth, throat, intestines, lungs) is covered by a variety of microbes. We are partially protected from their penetration into our bodies by immunoglobulin covering our mucous membranes. Spiritual experiences cause production of the pituitary secrete adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH), which enters the blood and goes to the adrenal glands and results in cortisol secretion. Cortisol inhibits the function of immunoglobulin. This, in turn, facilitates penetration of bacteria and viruses in our body and development of infections (Gregory and Ripski, 2008).

Another negative implication of stress is increased risk of high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke. Blood clotting is also increased (LeBlanc, 2009). This subsequently leads to such a disease as atherosclerosis and heart disease, and clots can be formed. Neck pains are also often, as well as back pains, muscle stress, chronic fatigue, along with a variety of

gastrointestinal symptoms (flatulence, stomach pain, intestinal upset, ulcers).

The likelihood of states of anxiety, depression, desire for disputes and relationship difficulties, panic also increases as a result of stress. Prolonged stress may decrease libido and often people just might stop to enjoy life (Alexander et al., 2009). The likelihood of cancer is raised. Some studies show that women who did not have the opportunity to express their emotions and get the proper help or advice, often had breast cancer.

For students such stressful moments result in difficulties with studying.

Stress hormones such as cortisol cause dendrites (branching of neurons that receive signals from neighboring neurons) to reach the part of the brain responsible for memory and learning ability (Watson et al., 2009).

As for emotions, stress does not allow people to fully express their emotions, which can result even in nervous breakdowns with corresponding effects on psychological and general state of health. In case of international students it is especially important to address the problem of stress management, as they have increased level of stress right from the beginning of studying, as they come to another country and have to adapt to the new conditions and at the same time do their best to study in them successfully.

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