



New Trends
in Psychology

The Effects of Occupational Stress on Physical Health and Mental Health of Employees

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Abstract: At present, stress has become a widespread phenomenon. Stress is seen as a response to a situation in which individuals are unable to meet the requirements required of them. Stress management is the combination of art with the science of effectively managing situations that may lead or have already led to stress. Stress makes the individual physically and mentally ill as follows: decreases the ability to concentrate and make effective decisions. Stress is part of our daily lives. Until we learn to recognize it and avoid its consequences, it often affects our state of mind, but especially our health. Stress factors are encountered both in the daily life of the individual and in his psychological environment. In general, the sources of stress can be divided into three main groups. Researchers need to continue to study how many of the occupational stressors in the work environment affect employees.

Keywords: stress; stressors; stress management; occupational stress

“Stress is like a spice: too little makes food unattractive, too much can suffocate you.”

Donald Tubesing

1. Introduction

The concept of stress belongs to Hans Hugo Bruno Selye and is defined as a set of reactions of the human body to the external action of some agents: physical, mental, chemical, biological, which generate morpho-functional changes in the body. The individual is in a permanent adaptation to the environment in which he lives.

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Adaptation means maintaining the integrity of the body, always threatened by all kinds of stressors. Stress occurs when the balance between the individual and the environment in which he lives is irreversibly disturbed.

The intense imbalance between the requirements of the individual and the environment and the response possibilities of the individual leads to the appearance of stress.

Today, stress has become a widespread phenomenon. Stress is seen as a response to a situation in which individuals are unable to meet the requirements required of them.

Occupational stress is not just the pressure of the workplace, it is a factor that influences the whole life and must be seen from several perspectives: workload, workplace relationships, organizational structure and climate, role ambiguity and role conflict, opportunities for career development, work-family relationship.

In general, occupational stress is caused by several factors, which can be classified into three groups: external factors, factors that depend on the organization, and factors that depend on the employee. Stress can manifest in different ways. The symptoms of stress can be divided into three main groups: physiological, psychological and behavioral.

Stress management is the combination of art with the science of effectively managing situations that may lead or have already led to stress. The role of stress management is to prevent the occurrence of stress in everyday life, but also to remove or reduce the negative effects of stress already installed on life, and thus to improve it.

Stress, in small amounts, helps us to be focused, energetic, alert. However, if the stress level increases, it can destroy our health, productivity, family, relationships with others. Stress makes the individual physically and mentally ill as follows: decreases the ability to concentrate and make effective decisions.

There is a good stress, eustress, which stimulates us to get great performance in the activity, but there is also a negative stress, distress, which can destroy our life, career, health, family.

An understanding of the meaning of stress can be found in the letters that make up the word STRESS.

“S” (stands for strength) – “Power struggle” physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually.

“T” (stands for traffic control) “Fight to control your thinking.”

“R” (stands for re-design) – fight for remodeling.

“E” (stands for erase) - “overcome the moment”, “crisis”, “get over it” “be above the situation”.

“S” (Is for sharing) - to “share” with others the well-being, the knowledge, the work duties.

In the European Union, stress at work is the second most common health problem after work. It affects 28% of EU employees. Stress at work is the cause of more than a quarter of all sick leave lasting at least two weeks of absence from work.

Stress at work can be caused by psychosocial risks such as activity planning, work organization, management (special professional demands and reduced opportunities for control over one's activity or problems such as violence and harassment at work). Some physical hazards, such as noise and temperature in the workplace, can also cause stress at work.

Stress is part of our daily lives. Until we learn to recognize it and avoid its consequences, it often affects our state of mind, but especially our health; we felt it on our own skin, giving it different names: annoyance, impatience, boredom, fatigue, anger, disgust, shame, fear, panic, anger, horror, frustration, all these states - predominantly affective - constituting, in fact, stress masks.

Despite the impressive amount of empirical data demonstrating the negative effects of stress at work on the health of individuals and organizations, there is little scientific evidence on how to effectively prevent this phenomenon. Occupational stress results from the employee's interaction with the environment and working conditions. Different individual characteristics such as personality and coping skills are very important in estimating work conditions conducive to occupational stress. In other words, what is stressful for one person may not be a problem for someone else. This view is based on prevention strategies that focus on employees and how to help them cope with difficult working conditions.

2. Stress at Work

As an essential way of human existence that cannot be given up, professional activity generates in contemporary society, most stressful situations. Stress is seen as a response to a situation in which individuals are unable to meet the requirements required of them.

When referring to stress affecting professional life, the term is occupational or organizational stress. Occupational / organizational stress has influences both psychologically and sociologically and physiologically and, in its definition, there are several meanings, such as stimulus or independent variable that acts on the individual; that characteristic of the environment or organization that threatens the employee; response or effect on the individual:

- occupational stress is a non-specific response of the body to any stimulus; stimulus-response interaction (cause-effect);

- occupational stress refers to a situation in which stressors interact with employees to change them, so that the person no longer functions normally, optimally; as a result of differences between individuals in terms of perception and responses, occupational stress is the result of negotiating between requirements (environmental pressures) and prioritizing individual goals;

- occupational stress represents the cognitive, physiological, conceptual effort to reduce, eliminate, master or tolerate internal or external demands that exceed the real or imaginary resources of the employee.

Occupational stress should not be viewed in a simplistic way - being under pressure at work, it should be analyzed as a factor that influences the whole life and should be viewed from several perspectives: workload, workplace relationships, organizational structure and climate, role ambiguity and role conflict, career development opportunities, work-family relationship.

3. Stress Factors

Stress factors are encountered both in the daily life of the individual and in his psychological environment. In general, the sources of stress can be divided into three main groups: External factors can be, for example, armed conflicts, economic and political instability in society, inflation, rising unemployment.

Factors that depend on the enterprise represent a very large group, which in turn can be divided into the following subgroups: Nature of the activity (complexity of tasks, independence in work, responsibility, working conditions); Incorrect distribution of tasks; Team relationships (lack of support, communication problems); The organizational structure; Management style (methods of unwarranted pressure and threats, accompanied by a feeling of anxiety, fear, depression).

Factors that depend on the employee are personal issues, as well as his specific qualities and traits. Among the risk factors that can be sources of stress at work, it is recommended to follow, in particular, the following:

- *The atmosphere at work and the way stress is viewed in that environment.*
- *The requirements to which employees are subjected, respectively if they have too much or too little work and / or if they are exposed to physical risks.*
- *Control, the degree of influence that employees have over the way they carry out their activity.*
- *Social relations at work, including the existence or non-existence of moral harassment.*
- *The change, respectively how much information the employees receive about the changes and whether they appear to be well thought out and planned.*
- *The role in the work team, in the sense that the attributions of the position held by the respective employee are clear.*
- *Support from colleagues and management for work integration.*
- *Vocational training to provide all employees with the necessary qualification to perform the tasks.*

The topic addressed in this paper is a topical one and is relevant in terms of practical purpose, understanding the issue of occupational stress is essential to identify appropriate management strategies.

The interest in this aspect is justified since occupational stress has major implications for both employees and organizations, especially from an economic point of view. The direct implications concern the poor participation of employees in work: absenteeism, delays, strikes, staff turnover, counterproductive behaviors, etc., while the indirect effects relate to maladaptive work behaviors of employees: insufficient

investment of physical and mental resources in the tasks of reduced performance, staff turnover and high costs associated with occupational health services.

Researchers need to continue to study how many of the occupational stressors in the work environment affect employees. There is a lot of information in this area, but knowledge of the different types and combinations of important stressors is limited. Most research on stress has been limited to a relatively small number of stressors. For example, few studies have focused on organizational constraints or social stressors. There is also a need for more research on how people cope with stress by referring to both constructive and destructive coping methods.

This can lead to more effective ways to educate people to cope more effectively with stress not only at work but also outside. From an organizational point of view, it is important to carry out research that indicates the ways of managing stress at work. Organizations invest heavily in task management, but the context in which they are performed is also important.

For some occupations, occupational stress is inherent and proper leadership techniques will go a long way in helping these employees cope with stress that cannot be eliminated. On the other hand, stressors can be created unintentionally by supervisors, and these unnecessary stressors must be kept under control.

Practices that control additional stressors while supporting employees to cope with the stressors inherent in their work have the potential to maximize the health and well-being of both employees and the organization.

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