

## STRESS AND STRESS MANAGEMENT: A FACTOR FOR HEALTHY LIVING

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### Abstract

In the present technological age with so many things to engage in, adequate information is needed to gain more knowledge about work of life and stress. This will help in reexamining ways of working and self-maintenance/caring. This paper is focused on the importance of healthy living (while it exposes the nature of stress) for appropriate skills and capacity development; to empower workers and enhance good health while working. The study aimed at making persons bring to mental stress as well as be aware of the negative effects of stress that contribute to various health challenges. The paper used book search, interviews and questionnaires for data collection. A descriptive research design was adopted because it studied people's attitudes and actions towards stress. The study was carried out at the Jos University Teaching Hospital(JUTH) and The Federal College of Animal Health and Production Technology and the Federal College of Veterinary and Medical Laboratory, all located within the National Veterinary Research Institute, Vom. Samples Of 30 students and 40 staff made up of 75 persons were used. Three research questions guided the study and simple percentages were used to analyze the research questions. The findings revealed that every person especially the workers experienced stress and had in one way or the other come in contact with the health risks and potential negative effects associated with stress but were ignorant of the managerial skills for a healthy living. Some tips that could be effectively used to manage stress were extensively discussed. Based on the findings, the paper recommends that health workshops be organized for institutions and other similar organizations.

**Keywords:** Work, Stress, Stress management and Healthy living

### Introduction

Stress can be good or bad. According to an anonymous source, "Stress can give you the push you need, motivating you to do your best and to stay focused and alert". The researcher further added that Stress is what keeps you on your toes during a presentation at work or drives you to study for your exam when you

should rather be engaged in leisure. Stress is generally defined as a psychological and physiological response to events that upset our balance in some way. Arnold et. al. (1986) cited in Asej (2014:184), observed that workers want jobs that are challenging provided the salary is reasonable. Undoubtedly, this statement cannot be ignored

because people overwork themselves to gain huge pay to the detriment of their health. This exposes them to living and sustaining their daily lives with drugs or aggressive attitudes. Of a truth, when needs keep pressurizing and life's demands exceed one's ability to handle, it is then that Stress becomes a threat to both the physical and psychological well being of a person.

Man is inherently rational; born with a tendency to help himself achieve desired goals. Man also is inherently irrational; born with a tendency to defeat those same goals. This leads to a miserable life and in extreme cases, suicidal tendencies (Albert Ellis, 1962).

Ogazi (2004), believes that life is full of struggles and that to live is to take a risk. She postulates that "Stress is a must visitor of life. Life without stress is not in existence". The only thing that stands between a man and what he wants from life is the will to try and the faith to believe it is possible (Myles, 1991). To live a life of effectiveness and happiness without stress is an illusion (Ogazi, 2004). The question is, "How do you manage your life, work and desires if you want an effective and happy life? The answer and the secret is to believe in yourself, to make good out of every uncomfortable situation around you. The answer was in line with Myles' statement when he said, "Your belief will get you where you will be. An incorrect belief system produces incorrect behaviour. Your behaviour is a reflection of what you truly believe.

In the opinion of the author, with sound reason and solid faith, one can defeat his intimidating conditions; hence Myles opined that "What we are is God's gift to us but what we make of ourselves is our choice". "Attitude is everything" (Keith, 2005). This implies that attitude and performance in the life struggles are determinants of destiny. However, looking at the potentiality in man, he can recreate his undesirable world-environment to be desirable to him. Ogazi (2020) in the bid to expose

people to the negative effects of Overworking without rest or recreation remarked thus," Recreating your undesirable world means changing the circumstances of your life by looking at your surrounding conditions and changing them to suit you, health-wise; that good time management is an ideal sister to healthy living and progress in life". It is on this 'good time management for a healthy living' that made the writer of Ecclesiastes (chapter three) stressed the fact that, 'There is time and season for everything'. This, when ignored affects man's with negativities, regrets and death in critical cases.

Life is full of uncertainties. These have made him act irrationally to conquer his environment sometimes to detriment of his life. To this effect, Adodo (2009) author of 'Nature Power' warns man to be well-bred and show a cautious approach to everyday living when he opined that "Uncertainty brings insecurity; insecurity brings worry; worry brings anxiety; anxiety brings fear. Fear defeats man. So living and living well needs wisdom and carefulness, having known that human life is made up of mixtures of stress experiences he meets on his way to make and unmake the environment. Man in his struggling is seeking for fame, comfort and happiness. "Unfortunately the environment becomes big factor he meets that dictates and constitutes all the needed" (Asej, 2009). The environment biologically, psychologically and physically influences his life positively or negatively depending on how he relates to it.

Behavior encompasses every action of man. It can affect man positively or negatively. Ekwe et al (2002), defines behaviour as the response of an organism to both internal and external stimuli, which may be observable or referred. It is any change in life space which is subject to psychological laws. Put in other words, behavior is said to be any activity of man that can be observed, measured and recorded. The author simplifies the definition of behavior by

saying that, it means ‘one’s responses to his environmental happenings’. Bringing to full understanding the concept of behavior the author explains it as one’s responses to his environmental happenings. The health of man has ironically become endangered by his own actions and ignorance. In exhibiting behavior, emotions are displayed. Such emotions include: feeling of joy, sadness, happiness, anger, stress, depression and so on. It is in this light that stress is here discussed along with skills in managing it.

### **Statement of the problem**

A man’s life is largely influenced positively or negatively by his beliefs and actions. Today many people are having health challenges due to over ambition. Over ambition creates stress. Stress is seen by the author as any stimulus that interferes with biological as well as psychological balance of an organism. Research has shown that unremitting stress leads to increased levels of ill-health, reducing people’s lives. Stress is one of the salient factors that affect length of life, capacity, performance, efficiency and effectiveness in the discharge of duties. Asej (2009) pointed out that, competitiveness; innovation and economic growth depend on being able to produce future leaders with the skills, attitudes and behaviours to be entrepreneurial and to act at the same time in a socially responsible way. Can we so be occupied with activities (workaholic-restlessness to acquire wealth) and still remain normal without a breach of health? No! It is disheartening that majority of people prefer their jobs to their health. Job satisfaction cannot be effective without healthiness, regardless of what the individual is paid. Giving all attention to work without knowing that health is wealth, shows up in the behavior of people who are unhealthy, disintegrated and unhappy working to make both ends meet. Constantly they live on drugs. Such persons end up sick, hospitalized and could even die. All works and no play make a

Jack a dull boy. Unmanaged stress is risky. Cumulated stress gradually deteriorates life. The focus of this paper is to increase understanding on the need to enhance and encourage people to choose positive thoughts and attitudes since it determines how we respond towards work and its challenges.

### **Research Questions.**

The following Research Questions guided the study:

1. Is everybody at work experiencing stress?
2. Does stress have any negative effect on the body or life?
3. Does stress relate to unhealthy living and can it be avoided?

### **Literature Review**

#### **The Conceptual Framework of Stress.**

Asej (2014.184), quoting Arnold and Feldman (1986), postulated that workers want jobs that are challenging provided the salary is reasonable. It is important to know that anything challenging is stressful. And in this term, the Stress can negatively affect the body. Furthermore, Omeje (2009) in Asej (2014.35), stated that “Our value system as stands today is faulty and there can’t be meaningful progress until this is attended to. Our value system has become money and the worship of wealth. Agreeing with Omeje, Ugorji (2008) in Asej (2014.36) recognized that everything in Nigeria has a price-(cash or kind). Money appears to be the greatest thing in the lives of people nowadays. Therefore they disregard health, and misplace it with ill quest for higher positions, wealth and fame. There is need for one to excel in any work he has chosen but in doing this Keith (2005) advised, “Learn to monitor your attitude and its impact on your work performance, your relationships and on everyone around you”.

George (2009) in a historical research on Stress, found out that Stress has different meanings to different people under different conditions. That is why Mendonca (2005), in the same vein defined Stress as "The way human beings react both physically and mentally to changes, events and situations in their lives" further explaining that "the reaction is based on perception of the events or situation. If viewed negatively the person is likely to be distressed, overwhelmed, oppressed or out of control. If viewed positively, the opposite be the case." Stress can be experienced differently for different reasons. It is all about perception. A positive Stressor for one can be a negative one for the other person (eg. public speaking). OHRM/MSD (2017), makes us to know that what is distressful to one person may not necessarily be distressful to another. An individual's perception, that is, the degree of threat the person feels and the amount of control he has over the circumstances can affect the degree of distress he experiences.

In order to help man safeguard himself against negative Stress in the work of life, Keith (2005) had this to say 'As we all know from experience, Stress is difficult if not impossible to avoid. But you can comb at Stress by choosing to be pre-active. By being pre-active you can anticipate a Stress before it arises". Work as important as it is, contributes to the welfare of the society but should not be done to endanger human health. (Keith, (2005) in his book, "Attitude is Everything".

According to Masheme et. al. (nd), "Stress is an adaptive response to a situation that is perceived as challenging or threatening to the person's well-being. Longman dictionary defines it as continuous feelings of worry about your work or personal life that prevents you from relaxing. Obimba et. al. (2003), repeating the words of Psychotherapist Albert Ellis (1962) in trying to explain causes of man's happiness or unhappiness said that, "It's

never the things that happen to you that upset you, it's your view of them". Ellis' argument focuses on thought when he said, it is the individual that destroys himself through irrational thinking. Based on the sayings above, we can understand that Stress comes from within, what we think and do. No wonder Rick Warren averred that "The battle of Stress in your life begins between your ears. So what you think about determines how stressed or worried you will be and what you fill your mind with determines the level of your life stress (kwakpovwe, 2020).

Two women interviewed in JUTH about Stress interpreted Stress to be, "Over tiredness, over laboring yourself. When one over labours herself, she becomes weak and can fall sick" From the women's point of view, Stress is a physical and psychological responses to the pressures of daily life; over done, it can incur weakness of the body. And Mendonca (2005), an Army in 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, added that, Stress is a fact of life wherever you are and whatever you are doing. It can't be avoided but can be learnt on how to manage it. Selye (1976), in support of that maintains that Stress is a fact of life, in his book, 'Health and Disease' underscored the fact that, "Stress is part of our daily human experience, but it is associated with a great variety of essentially dissimilar problems such as surgical trauma, burns, emotional arousal, mental or physical effort, fatigue, fear, pain, the need for concentration, the humiliation of frustration, the loss of blood, intoxication with drugs or environmental pollutants or event the kind of unexpected success that requires an individual to reformulate his lifestyle." Linchan (1993), a member of American Medical Association, defined Stress as any interference that disturbs a person's mental and physical wellbeing and as a response to a demand that is placed upon you. Therefore Stress is a fairly universal experience for all human beings, including animals, in fact, all living things. In line with the findings of George (2009), it simply means

that, in every reaction and interaction of man as he tries to love, work, study, save time for friends and family, experiences Stress.

Other definitions of Stress as reviewed by Selye (1975) include: in behavior science, it is regarded as the “Perception of threat, with resulting anxiety, discomfort, emotional tension and difficulty in adjustment,” in the group situation, lack of structure or loss of anchor “makes it difficult or impossible for the group to cope with the requirements of the situation and the problem of leadership and interpersonal behavior”. Stress by Eugene Yates (nd) in terms of Pure Neuroendocrinology is defined as any stimulus that will provoke the release of adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH) and adrenal glucocorticoids. Finally, Richard Lazarus (2000), famous for his work in Cognitive Psychology and focus on the Emotions, being aware of the difficulty of reaching a precise definition of Stress, came up with different meanings from various fields of human endeavor: ‘In spite of consistent confusion about the precise meaning of the term, Stress is widely recognized as a central problem in human life. Scientists of many disciplines have conceptualized Stress but each field appears to have something different in mind concerning its meaning. For the Sociologists, it is social disequilibrium, that is, disturbances in the social structure within which people live. Engineers conceive of Stress as some external force which produces strain in materials expose to it. Physiologists deal with the physical Stressors that include a wide range of stimulus conditions that are noxious to the body. In the history of Psychological Stress research, there has been no clear separation between Physical Stressors which attack biological tissues systems and Psychological Stressors which produce their effects purely because of their psychological significance.”

The above concepts about Stress show that, on this planet earth, Stress according to Hans Selye is not something to be avoided. Indeed, it can't be avoided since staying alive creates some demands for life- maintaining energy. “Even when man is asleep, his heart, respiratory apparatus, digestive track, nervous system and other organs must continue to function. Complete freedom from Stress can be expected only after death.”\_Hans Selye.

### Stages of Stress

Selye in his search for a new hormone, described in a note to Nature in 1936, that GAS (GENERAL ADAPTION SYNDROME), which manifests in extreme Stress, has three stages. They are Alarm, Resistance and Exhaustion stage. The stages are the signs Stress gives to the body before it breaks one down. The signs are:

- a. **Alarm reaction:** In this stage, the body perceives a threatening situation due to exposure to the Stressor. The challenging situation will send biochemical messages to various parts of the body. The message can duly manifest in the form of increased respiration, blood pressure, heartbeat, muscle tension, strain and other psychological signs. When the Stressor continues and is compatible with adaption, features of the alarm reaction disappears and resistance develops.
- b. **Resistance stage:** If the person does not adhere to the body's uncertain signs, reactions and warnings and continues with his too ambitious demands to make and unmake “his” environment, the state rises. Prolonged exposure to the Stressor results in exhaustion.
- c. **Exhaustion stage:** At this stage, the capacity of the body to cope with Stress situation has diminished because already the body's resistance capacity is limited. Thus, the body manifests destructive consequences e.g. the person can collapse or feel dizzy. This is caused by increase in

the sources of the Stress. If the weight is too much for the body to carry, it leads to body incapacitation or death.

To curb this there is need for withdrawal from the Stressful environment in order to rebuild the survival capabilities so as to regain energy.

### Types of Stress

Staff Counselor's Office, OHRM/MSD (2017), defined Stress to be the body's natural reaction in response to a physical and/ or emotional challenge. That means, Stress is natural and normal, and anything that is normal and natural can come in positive or negative ways. For example, "struggles to attend college, study to write exams and pass. All these Stress create personal development opportunities", (Mendonca, 2005). Therefore, some Stress can be beneficial to man. However, it is good also to understand that each Stressor has what it triggers. That is the type of Stress an individual experiences depends on the type of the Stressor involved. On this belief, Pacak et. al. (2001) through experimental test demonstrated that different Stressors activate different Stress biomarkers and different regions of the brain. He and his associates concluded that each Stressor has its own specific neuro-chemical signature.

Staff Counselor's Office identified the following forms of Stress while dealing with their clients.

- a) **Baseline Stress:** we encounter this type of Stress when we are dealing with routine issues at home and at work place. It is Stress from our day to day living activities.
- b) **Acute Stress:** this is the reaction of the body to a real or perceived threat to our well being, either physically or psychologically. In conjunction, Cannon, (1932) working at Harvard in his book
- c) **Cumulative Stress:** This Stress comes when high levels of Stress are constant or ongoing. They result in Cumulative (chronic) Stress. American Psychiatric Association called it, 'Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)'. The Association explained PTSD as a condition in which traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in the form of intrusive recollections, dreams, or dissociative flash back episode. The body gathers up this kind stress; building up unrecognized over a period of time. It creates uncomfortable condition physically and mentally to the body.
- d) **Critical Incident Stress:** This kind of Stress is caused by sudden and unexpected events of life as in natural disasters, death, sexual assault, suicide, war accidents etc.

coined the term 'fight or flight' to describe an animal's response to threat; opined that "The concept of 'fight or flight' proposes that animals react to threats with a general discharge of the sympathetic nervous system, priming the animal for fighting or fleeing. The above postulation according to Selye was recognized as the first stage (Acute Stress) of a General Adaption Syndrome (GAS) to be a universal Stress response among vertebrates and other organisms. In Acute Stress Disorder, the individual, (emphasized by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (DSM-IV) of the American Psychiatric Association) while experiencing the trauma or after the event too experiences three several dissociative symptoms such as a subjective sense of numbing, detachment, or absent of emotional responsiveness, reduction in awareness of surroundings; depersonalization or dissociative amnesia. The trauma cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupation or other important areas of functioning. In summary, Acute Stress prepares the body to protect itself.

its occurrence makes one to lose control. It can occur at anytime, anywhere, anyplace. It is made up of acute responses to violence, trauma and threats to life.

### Factors That Bring About Stress.

Stressors are those things that we get Stress from. Stressors can come through:

- i. The environment (noise, weather, pollution),
- ii. Social activities :( academic pressures).
- iii. Daily responsibilities/life events: (decisions, job, family demands, marriage, divorce, death of loved one).
- iv. Physiological experiences (poor feeding, sleep disturbances, wounds).
- v. Mental issues (thoughts, expectations placed on ourselves and on others, perception). These stressors can be associated with public service career fields where people experience intense levels of Stress because of imminent and high degree of uncertainty. Mendonca(2005) coined thus, "No one has ever planned to have a high Stress career but each level one enters in life presents its demands which create stressful conditions.

The other happenings of life that can lead to the development of Stress include;

1. Trauma from abuse, victimization or death of a loved one.
2. Job demands: Time design and working condition
3. Task/Role demand: The type of role one takes in his working place e.g. a manager working more than time stipulated so as to handle all problems and take all decisions.
4. Negative attitudes on one's job
5. Poor relationships and friendship cycle.
6. Negative experiences of life, ways of handling and reacting to them.
7. Relationship: Inadequate interpersonal relationship and social support from colleagues. e.g. in an office/organization

where everyone seeks and minds his own without effective communication; in a home relationship gap between the children and the parents, husbands and wives.

8. Family crises: Divorce, marital difficulties, marital disengagement, lack of friendship, childlessness, death, nagging wife or husband, poverty, pregnancy, abuse, quarrel, infidelity, family or children power structure etc
9. Home or office institution with too much dos and don'ts excessive rules and discipline with no recreation.
10. Personality problem: Lack of respect or value from others due to poor or low home or educational background which leads to low self-esteem that makes one to constantly withdraws, isolates and unhappy.
11. Kind of leadership: in an institution where the managerial styles of the hierarchical order in staffing is done with difficult task and excessive control, threatening the job satisfaction of the employees; leaving them with fear and secret bags at home.
12. Natural disaster :Accidents, flooding etc
13. Negative life style: over feeding, under feeding, lack of play, poor self perception, low self-concept, lack of humor etc.

### Others causes can come as:

- i. Economic uncertainty /problems: Getting low and spending high, hyper inflation
- ii. Political instability: Changes in government; rules, laws and programs.
- iii. Technological know- how: New products and their applications
- iv. Drug abuse: Constant use of some drugs like pills, sedatives, slimmer
- v. Hereditary: Some people genetically by birth are restless. So they are prone to stress.
- vi. Over ambitious: Pursuing many things at the same time.

## Symptoms of Stress

Our body, experiencing certain predictable changes inform of increased heart rate, secretions of stimulatory hormones, increased voluntary muscle tension and a change in stomach and internal secretions as exposed by the American Medical Association (AMA), is the body's response to physical and psychological Stress symptoms. If one is likely feeling or do experience any of these signs to be listed below, that is the body showing up "fight or flight" mechanism against foreign occurrence it's witnessing, the person is under Stress. Symptoms of Stress appear in four categories of which are:

- a. Physical symptoms: Headaches, stomachaches, sleep inability, restlessness, pounding heart, fatigue, digestive upset, worry, mood swings, bad temper and body pains. It is of these signs that Anusiem (2006) saw and quoted Baron et. al. (1980) thus, "Human behavior is manipulated and controlled by environmental variables. Quest to get rich quick is an infectious problem among people of this age" especially the civil servants. Man is a perpetually wanting animal said by Maslow (1943) in Obimba(2003). Therefore man overworks himself to make and unmake his environment to suit him big. The insatiable nature of man is exposed by Obimba (2003) who proposed that, by virtue of the nature of man, he is entitled to his opinions and beliefs and is capable of initiating self-directed personality and behavior that would culminate in the satisfaction of his needs and the achievement of his goal. For needs and goals actualization, man wounds his health.
- b. Emotional symptoms: Fear, anxiety, tension, anger, sadness, irritation, sexual problems, palpitation. Adodo (2009) explained that Emotional Stress is a common experience. Some people are over ambitious, pursuing many things at a time.

Eagerness to succeed in life. Failure to achieve the aim one sets for oneself; hatred in the family, insecurity, fear etc cause Emotional Stress. They cause Emotional Stress because they all begin from thoughts. According to the bible in Proverbs 23:7 quotes, "As man thinks so he is". In this regard, John (1993), conformed that. "It is true that what I really believe, affects my attitude but what I believe may be untrue. What I believe, may be unhealthy. It may hurt others and destroy me".

- c. Mental/Cognitive symptoms: Forgetfulness, lack of concentration, confusion, lack of interest in activities, negative thoughts/attitude. Because man's cognition has been affected, Kwakpovwe(2020) exclaimed, "When you keep making mistakes and making wrong decisions due to lack of knowledge, the centre of your life will shatter and when the centre cannot hold, everything else falls apart".
- d. Behavioral/Social symptoms: Nagging, resentment, withdrawal, loneliness, aggression. Humor is a powerful motivator. The more humor and laughter in your life, the less stress you will have which in turn means more positive energy to help you.(keith, 2005).

## Consequences of Stress

In this contemporary world filled with challenges resulting from the get rich quick syndrome, it is pertinent for everyone to listen to the 'voice' of the body system and put a stop to overambitious attitudes and embark on things capable of promoting life (God's greatest gift to man) and healthy living. Generally, a person experiencing Stress may appear abnormally pale, skinned, have cool skin and a dry mouth. The intensity of it is seen in changes in heart rate, respiratory rate, blood pressure and perspiration on the palms.



Pocket Dictionary for Nurses (1984), sees Stress as “any factor that threatens the health of the body or has an adverse effect on its functioning such as injury, diseases or worry”. The more we know ourselves, the more we understand what can deteriorate our health for Stress is a parasite that encroaches into human life unnoticed. The consequences cannot be overlooked if one wants to enjoy a healthy life.

### **Some of the aftereffects of Stress on the Body are as follows**

**1. Medical issues:** strain, headache, ulcer, heart problems, hypertension, paralysis, joints and muscles stiffness, stroke, diabetes etc. The interview carried out in JUTH showed that Stress makes the immune system of the body to drop thereby opening rooms for different health challenges. Three Patients in Endocrinological Ward, were identified to have had the experience of chronic Stress which effected the functioning of the body adversely; leaving them with hypertension, sugar problem, shortage of oxygen, and stroke. These health issues landed them into the hospital.

#### **Here are some highlights of their medical condition:**

a. Hypertension- it is called high blood pressure. It is the elevation of the arterial blood pressure above the normal range expected in a particular age group. The Pocket Dictionary for Nurses,(1984)says that “It may result from diseases of the kidneys, endocrine system or arteries. Complications that may arise from hypertension include: atherosclerosis, heart failure, cerebral haemorrhage and kidney failure. Most cases of hypertension depend upon long term drug therapy to lower the blood pressure and maintain it within the normal range. One of the three Patients diagnosed hypertension later died of kidney failure.

- b. Cerebral hemorrhage- is bleeding from cerebral artery into the tissue of the brain. It is caused by degenerative disease of the blood vessels and high blood pressure. The symptoms vary from a transient weakness or numbness to profound coma and death.
- c. Stroke – is a sudden attack of weakness affecting one side of the body, resulting from an interruption to the flow of blood to the brain.. The primary disease is in the heart or blood vessels and the effect on the brain is secondary. The flow of blood may be prevented by thrombosis, embolus or hemorrhage. A stroke varies in severity from a passing weakness or tingling in a limb to a profound paralysis, coma and death.
- d. Paralysis- is muscle’s weakness. It varies in its extent, severity and the degree of flaccidity(lacking in firmness) or spasticity (resistance of passive movement) according to the nature of the underlying diseases and its distributions in the brain, spinal cord, peripheral nerves muscles etc,
- e. Thrombosis- is condition in which the blood changes from a liquid to a solid state and produces a clot. When thrombosis is an artery, it obstructs the flow blood to the tissues it supplies. It can also occur in the vein and may be associated with inflammation.
- f. Embolus- means a material as a blood clot, fat, air, amniotic fluid or a foreign body that is carried by the blood from the point in the circulation to lodge at another point.

#### **Psychological issues:**

Apprehension, fearful, anxiety, uncheerfulness, unfriendliness, dissatisfaction, shock, tension, depression, trauma etc

- a. Depression is a form of mental disorder featured by a prolonged periods of sadness, gloom and negative feelings which leaves the person to feel insecure, lonely, helpless, uncertain and discouraged. A depressed person finds it difficult to sleep, loose

appetite, finds his hobbies uninteresting. He is lonely but wishes to stay without others. In his mind, he thinks only about illness, suicide, death, all negativities. It may be caused by frustration

- b. Trauma- it is an emotionally painful and harmful event which may lead to neurosis.
- c. Neurosis- this is a mental ill-health in which insight is retained but there is a maladaptive way of behaving or thinking that causes suffering. The symptom may be psychological severe emotional state as in anxiety state or depression: distressing behavior or thoughts as in phobia or obsessions or physical complaints. Cure is by psychotherapy, and chemotherapy(tranquilizer)
- d. Anxiety- is general pervasive fear. As a form of neurosis, the treatment is psychotherapy, behavior-therapy and tranquilizers

**Behavioral issues:** Low productive, faulty decisions, absenteeism, drunkenness, nagging, constant complaining, fault finding, irritation, smoking etc

**Physical issues:** Worn-out, weak, slow, untidy, pale, sickly, fatigue etc

**Biological issues:** Hormones imbalance, infertility, depression, restlessness etc  
Consistence stress brings about changes in the balance of hormones in the body.

### Stress Management Skills

Stress managerial skills as stated by (Smith, 2007) quoted by Okafor (2011), starts with identifying the sources of Stress in an individual's life. To manage Stress well, it's vital to know yourself and then carefully consider the causes of your Stress. Stressors are unavoidable inevitable. Distress skills are designed to help you bear pain (stress) skillfully (Linchan, 1993). On learning this, you can minimize the harmful effects of Stress. It can be changed or the source changed. More effective way to deal with

stress is to avoid, alter, accept and adapt to it as propounded by Okafor et al (2011). But note that not all Stress can be **avoided**, and it is not healthy to avoid a situation that needs to be addressed. On this kind, learn to say "no", know your limits and stick to them. Avoid picking more responsibilities than you can handle. **Alter** the stressful situation you can't avoid. Find out what to do to change things that the situation may not occur again. Change your way of handling things. **Accept** what can't be changed or controlled. Accept things as they are for the world is an imperfect place and share your feelings. **Adapt** to the things stressing you. View the Stressors that is, the situations from a positive perspective. Rename the problem and adjust to it. Try always to reflect on things appreciated in your life; may be gifts, qualities. For Joe Vitale cited in Kwakpovwe (2020) stated that "Stress starts from thoughts. You created this moment from what you thought and felt three days ago. What you are thinking and feeling right now will create your next moment". This is because, "Stress is a state of mental tension and worry caused by problems in your life or work.-Merriam Webster Dictionary.

Robert (2003) explained that "Decisions making is easy if there are no contradictions in your value system". So, make a decision to refrain yourself from Stress. When you have good ideas on how to deal with your Stress;

- i. Don't commiserate. That is, don't say 'but I have tried it so often'. Decide to decide.
- ii. Don't procrastinate. Act on the ideas of quitting or managing Stress well. Don't wait until deadline or you will not accomplish what you could do. Do it now. Be dedicated in doing it; don't wait until good moment or opportunity comes for Robert (2003) pointed out that "Success comes from visualizing yourself the way you want to be. Success for anything is not found in self-

worth, nor undeveloped talent, nor living in a right place nor being in right ties nor training but by believing in yourself"- your ability to change odds to suit you healthily.

### **Stress Tolerating Skills**

Rick Warren stated in Kwakpovwe (2020) that the "battle with Stress in your life begins between your ears". Ease your Stress life. The less Stress you feel, the more energy you will have to exercise positive thinking muscles. The truth is that, eliminating all Stress in life is an unrealistic goal but one can live a more balanced life. When work is stressful, it is nice to look for ways to balance the work time with non-stressful leisure time depending on your need. Leisure time helps you to do what makes you feel relaxed and happy. Considering the kind of job you do and its demand;

1. Look for support group with whom you can join, the group where you can feel accepted and recognized.
2. Identify your irrational thoughts, your pessimism. Change and counter them with positive ones the moment you notice yourself thinking pessimistically. Continue until you build more positive muscles for rational thinking.
3. Tell a supportive person how you feel. Share yourself doubts with a trusted friend. Don't bottle up or isolate yourself. It is a significant risk to health.
4. Act to settle a problem. Don't leave any conflict unsettled. Research has shown that resolving a problem will release your stress more quickly and effectively than just complaining about it.
5. Be open and free to tell any friend that hurts your feeling. It is less stressful than trying to ignore it.
6. Set priorities. Make a- to- do list deciding on what is important to be done today and what can wait.
7. Practice facing a stressful moment. Imagine the situation to face.
8. Practice dealing with the challenge and rehears your reactions
9. Examine your expectations. Set realistic goals. Be satisfied doing the best you can and give room for mistakes.(self or others)
10. Live a healthy life style
11. Learn to accept change as part of life
12. Schedule for vacation. Avoid too much appointments
13. Learn to say 'no'

### **Stress Reduction and Relaxation**

Stress reduction and relaxation is an act of decreasing stress in work life and thereby making valuable rules that will help you to have control on the time that you spend working, resting and enjoying yourself. Okafor et. al. (2011) underscored that "Stress levels can be controlled with relaxation techniques that evokes the body's relaxation response, a state of restfulness that is the opposite of the Stress response. To reduce the Stress, you first identify how you react to Stress, determine how to go about it and draw healthy skills to manage it. Physically, Stress is reduced providing pleasant, comfortable external environment/surroundings and by helping yourself maintain internal environment by controlling pains, administering necessary fluids and treatments. Psychologically, it is reduced by discussing the problems and the sources with self or to another and observing clinical procedures. "Unexamined life is not worth living"- says Aristotle. When you examine your life, it helps you according to Jim Rohn cited in Kwakpovwe (2020) reduce the Stress in your life and have an ideal plans for a healthy comfortable life. Resist distraction and get focused.

The following ways are suggested for Stress reduction and relaxation

- a. Positive communication
- b. The value of solid friendships.

- c. Voice out your emotional pain in an atmosphere of empathy, genuineness and unconditional positive regards. That is with a real trusted person who can listen well to you without judging or condemning you.
- d. Read self-help books
- e. Live your life using humour and preferred languages
- f. Give mental relaxation encouraging positive thinking and relaxation of the muscles
- g. Change your diets
- h. Meditation
- i. Relaxation: Calmly or diaphragmatic breathing
- j. Make your living space a place that honors the person you are. Make that space comfortable and attractive for you.
- k. Spend time with people who make you feel good about yourself.
- l. Make your meal a special time. Arrange your food in an attractive way on your plate. If you eat with others, encourage discussion of pleasant topics.
- m. While at work, go for recreation. Don't allow other good things you like to distract you from work. Do things that will make you feel better about yourself e.g dancing.
- n. Do something nice to other person, smile at one who looks sad. Send a card, visit a sick friend.
- o. Change negative thoughts about yours self to positive ones. Pay attention and be aware of the negative messages you give to yourself. Then develop positive statements you can say to yourself to replace the negative ones whenever you notice yourself thinking. For instance; Curic et al (2012) pointed out some of these thoughts as tabulated below.

	<b>Negative thoughts</b>	<b>Positive thought</b>
1	I am not worth anything	I am a valuable person
2	I have never accomplished anything	I have accomplished many things
3	I don't deserve good life	I deserve to be happy and healthy
4	I am a jerk	I am a great person
5	I always make mistakes	I do many things well.
6	I must do all today	There is another time left

p. Identify the irrational beliefs that are controlling your life. e.g. I must have the respect of all. Everybody must love or like me. I must have /get anything I want. When you do not get as you thought, you end up having lowered self-esteem and self-condemnation. Stress sets in. Note: changing negative thoughts you have

incurred for long to positive ones takes time and persistence. However, repeating them over and over to yourself especially when you are deeply relaxing, doing deep breathing or relaxation exercise or when you are falling asleep or walking, helps to reinforce the positive thoughts for stress release.

**The Unhealthy Way OF Managing Stress**

A Stress is an occasional attribute of everybody's ecology of life. It can equally be described as pressure, tension or worry resulting from struggles in meeting the challenges of daily life. It makes one to experience general uneasiness which is anxiety. The pressure of Stress can adversely

affect the functioning of the body. I mean, the constrain Stress exacts on the mind or the body is liable to cause the impairment of the mental or physical functioning of the human system. For this reason, it is very pertinent to handle Stress with positive attitudes. The facts remain that, managing Stress with irrational behaviours result in behaviours that can not

ordinarily be described as normal or healthy. On this note, AMA outlined the followings as the unhealthy ways to manage Stress. They include: procrastination, over/under eating, smoking, avoiding responsibilities, repressing negative feelings, setting impossible high standard for yourself, worrying about things you can't change, comparing yourself with others, withdrawal, not asking for help, not giving yourself break, self injury, self medication, taking drug/alcoholic and so on.

## METHODOLOGY

The research design in this study is descriptive survey research design. The design was adopted because it aimed at ascertaining people's attitude and action towards Stress. The area of the study is Jos zone. The study was carried out at Jos University Teaching Hospital (JUTH), Lamingo, Jos East; Federal College of Animal Health and production Technology, Vom Jos South and Federal

**Research Question One:** Is everybody at work experiencing Stress?

College of Veterinary and Medical Laboratory Technology, Vom, Jos South. The population of the study was 80 persons made up of Staff, Students, Traders and Artisans. Instrument for data collection was Book search, Interview and Questionnaire. Out of 80 questionnaires distributed, 75 were filled and returned for analysis; 42 copies from the Staff, 27 copies from the Students, 5 from the Traders, and 1 from Artisan giving a response rate of 93.8%. In these, each respondent was randomly selected for the study from each organization. . The data collected were analyzed using the questions formulated for the study. The statistical method employed was simple percentage (%).

## DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This phase presents the results of the data analysis as they concern the responses of each of the research questions. See the tables below.

**Table 1: Everybody at work experiences Stress signs**

S/N	Items	Yes response + (%)	No response + (%)	Total response (%)
1.	Do you feel burnt out at office or home work at times?	58(77.3)	16(21.3)	100
2.	Do you have difficulty sleeping or focusing on a single task for an extended period of time?	42(56.0)	32(42.7)	100
3.	Do you have frequent headache, stomach problem or back pain?	38(50.7)	35(46.7)	100
4	Do you get confused at certain stage at work?	41(54.7)	31(41.3)	100
5	Do you forget to eat your meal at due time at work?	48(64.0)	27(36.0)	100
6	Have you felt your head heavy at work?	47(62.7)	28(37.3)	100
7	Do you feel dizzy working, standing in work walking after a long period of time?	44(58.7)	31(41.3)	100
8	Do you always take drugs before your body will calm down?	47(62.7)	27(36.0)	100
	Total score and percentage	365	227	

Table 1 above shows the analysis of data collected for research question one. The total score (365) and percentage (486.7) reveals people's awareness attitude towards Stress and the warning

signs. Here respondents with high score accepted that Stress is experienced by anyone who is at work. Item number one with 77.3% and number 5 with 64.0 are of the proof that everybody at work experiences Stress at work.

### Research Question Two.

Does Stress have any negative effect on the body or life while at work?

Table 2: Stress has negative effects on the body and life while at work.

S/N	Items	Yes response + (%)	No response + (%)	Total response (%)
1	Have you considered quitting your job, ending a relationship or even suicide just to get it over with?	21(28.0)	52(69.3)	100
2	Do your legs get swollen or shinning at work?	12(16.0)	63(84.0)	100
3	Do you feel restlessness in your leg, unease in your body at a place?	32(42.7)	39(52.0)	100
4	Do you feel your face dry and compressed at work?	29(38.7)	44(58.7)	100
5	Do you sometimes have shivering hands, sweating palms and anxiety at work?	27(36.0)	46(61.3)	100
6	Have you felt lack of concentration after some while of working?	10(13.3)	64(85.3)	100
7	Do you experience mood swings at work?	26(34.7)	48(64.0)	100
8	Have your body felt so fatigued that you lose interest in other activities?	35(46.7)	38(50.7)	100
9	Do you experience overeating or under-eating at work?	7(9.3)	68(90.7)	100
10	Do you smoke or take alcohol to regain your energy?	18(24.0)	55(73.3)	100
11	Do you have gastrointestinal problems after some hours of working?	30(40.0)	45(60.0)	100
12	Do your eyes do turn red at work?	32(42.7)	43(57.3)	100
13	Do you have pounding heart or short temper while working at home or in the office?	29(38.7)	44(58.7)	100
	Total score and percentage	308	649	

From Table 2 above, which has the total 'No' percentage score of 865.3, the respondents indicated that some people work without experiencing stress. The respondents rejected the fact that Stress has negative effects on the body of people at work. Based on the percentage, it is seen that items 2 with (84.0%), 6 with (85.3%) and 9 with (90.7%) proved the high level of their rejection of Stress signs at work.

### Research Question Three

Does stress relate to unhealthy living and can it be avoided?

Table 3: Stress relates to unhealthy living and can't be avoided.

S/N	Items	Yes response + (%)	No response + (%)	Total response (%)
1	Do you give a mighty heave after leaving your work	38(50.7)	33(44.0)	100

	for a moment?			
2	Do you sense calmness and light in your body system after a rest or sleep or medication after working?	64(85.3)	10(13.3)	100
3	Have you feel aggressive at a point to self or others at work and softly and goodly during resting?	46(61.3)	29(38.7)	100
	Total score and percentage	148	72	

Looking at the above table, the number 148 responses with the percentage score of 197.3 for 'Yes' and number 72 responses with the percentage score of 96 for 'No' pointed out that Stress is inevitable at work. The analysis revealed that the respondents were found to display the attitude that accepted the impact Stress plays at work and the comfort the body gains outside Stress. The item two (2) with responses of 64 was of the high opinion that Stress exists at work, it cannot be avoided and it discomforts the body, affecting a healthy living.

### Discussion of the findings

The result of research question 1, reveals the awareness of the respondents on the existence of Stress at work. This outcome is collaborated in Longman Dictionary which confirms Stress as continues feelings of worry about your work or personal life that prevents you from relaxing. Also, an Anonymous commented that Stress is what keeps you on your toes during a presentation at work or drives you to study for your exam when you'd rather be watching TV. This means that Stress is felt in every life event. Therefore everybody working undergoes Stress but the warning signs differ depending on the individuals and work.

In response to research question two, table 2 the analysis reveals that the respondents indicated not experiencing the warning signs of Stress at work. They showed negative attitude to listening, interpreting and

understanding the warning signs of discomfort of their body. Thus, this question, 'Can we so be occupied with activities and still remain normal without a breach of health? The answer is 'No'. Many authors who had written on Stress associated work with Stress. The argument is that Stress is a fairly universal experience for all human beings. Richard (2000) saw it as a central problem in human life. And Mendonca (2005), collaborated the findings of this study by stating that no one has ever planned a high Stress career but each level one enters in life presents its demands which creates stressful conditions. The result findings manifested total ignorance of the workers about Stress and its signs. In the same vein, Myles (1993) noted that negligence is responsible for not accepting to have experienced Stress and the warning signs. According to his discussion, many people work all day, every day. Many have worked all day, every day and suddenly realized they have grown old and can no longer enjoy life. Some realized that while on sick bed or in the grave. He emphasized that they missed living because they were so busy trying to make one.

The analysis of research question three table 3, reveals that the respondents associated Stress with unhealthy living. In line with the findings of this analysis, Obimba (2003) observed that for needs and goals actualization man wounds his health. This analysis also showed that the respondents are aware of the danger signs of Stress and are not comfortable with the signs.

## TABLE DATA ANALYSIS COMPARISON

Table I : Occupation

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Trade	5	6.7	6.7	6.7
Student	30	40.0	40.0	46.7
Civil/Public Servant	39	52.0	52.0	98.7
Artisan/Hand work	1	1.3	1.3	100.0
Total	75	100.0	100.0	

**Table II: Do you have sleeping challenges (too much or an inability to sleep**

	Frequency	Percent
Missing System	75	100.0

Table III

S/N	Items	Yes response (%)	No response (%)	Total response (%)
1	Do you have difficulty sleeping or focusing on a single task for an extended period of time?	42(56.0)	32(42.7)	100
2	Do you have sleeping challenges (too much or an inability to sleep)?	–	–	100
3	Have you considered quitting your job, ending a relationship or even suicide just to get it over with?	21(28.0)	52(69.3)	100
4	Do you get confused at certain stage at work	41(54.7)	31(41.3)	100
5	Have you considered quitting your job, ending a relationship or even suicide just to get it over with?	21(28.0)	52(69.3)	100
6	Do you feel burnt out at office work or home work at times?	58(77.3)	16(21.3)	100
7	Do you sense calmness and light in your body system after a rest or sleep or medication after working?	64(85.3)	10(13.3)	100
8	Do you smoke or take alcohol to regain your energy?	18(24.0)	55(73.3)	100
9	Do you always take drugs before your body will calm down after work?	47(62.7)	27(36.0)	100
10	Do you feel your face dry and compressed at work?	29(38.7)	44(61.3)	100
11	Have you felt your head heavy at work?	47(62.7)	28(37.3)	100
12	Do you give a mighty heave after leaving your work for a moment?	38(50.7)	33(44.0)	100



13	Do your legs get swollen or shinning at work?	12(16.0)	63(84.0)	100
14	Do you feel restlessness in your leg, unease in your body at a place?	32(42.7)	39(52.0)	100
15	Do you feel dizzy working, standing in work or walking after a long period of time?	44(58.7)	31(41.3)	100
16	Do you forget to eat your meal at due time at work?	48(64.0)	27(36.0)	100
17	Do you experience overeating or undereating at work?	7(9.3)	68(90.7)	100
18	Do you get confused at certain stage at work?	41(54.7)	31(41.3)	100
19	Have you felt lack of concentration after some while of working?	10(13.3)	64(85.3)	100
20	Do you get confused at certain stage at work?	41(54.7)	31(41.3)	100
21	Do you experience mood swings at work?	26(34.7)	48(64.0)	100
22	Do you have frequent headache, stomach problem or back pain?	38(50.7)	35(46.7)	100
23	Have your body felt so fatigued that you lose interest in other activities?	35(46.7)	38(50.7)	100
24	Do you have frequent headache, stomach problem or back pain?	38(50.7)	35(46.7)	100
25	Do you have gastrointestinal problems after some hours of working?	30(40.0)	45(60.0)	100
26	Have you felt aggressive at a point to self or others at work and softly and goodly during resting?	46(61.3)	29(38.7)	100
27	Do you sense calmness and light in your body system after a rest or sleep or medication after working?	64(85.3)	10(13.3)	100
28	Do you sometimes have shivering hands, sweating palms and anxiety?	27(36.0)	46(61.3)	100
29	Do your eyes do turn red at work?	32(42.7)	43(57.3)	100
30	Do you have pounding heart or short temper while working at home or in the office?	29(38.7)	44(58.7)	100

Going through the Tables of Comparison, the result in First Table shows that every worker undergoes Stress while at work and Second Table shows the confusion of workers on identifying the signs and symptoms of Stress as they work. Third table shows that most of the respondents: (77.3%) agreed that they feel burnt out at work; 64.0% do forget to eat meal at due time; 54.7% confused at certain stage at work; 58.7% feel dizzy working, standing or walking after long period of time; 62.7% feel

heavy head at work while 61.3 feel aggressive at a point at work and softly and goodly during resting and ( 85.3%) sense calmness and light after rest, sleep or medication after working; . The interpretation is that everybody at work is experiencing Stress at one time or the other and in different ways for different reasons depending on the Stressor and the individual's perception. In addition to this, result shows ignorant of this has made/ led many workers into unknowingly acquiring chronic Stress

which has pushed them down while on duty post and some others having internal sickness manifesting as BP, constant body pains, and so on.

### **Conclusion**

From the findings of this study, Stress is a pressure, a force, or a strain placed on something (University of Houston, Resource center). Stress in life is inescapable. This means that all living things experience Stress because any type of change that causes physical, emotional and psychological strain to the body is called Stress. The study also borrowing the proof of Selye underscores that 'Stress is nonspecific'. This emphasizes the fact that Stress means different thing to different people under different circumstances. Results also expose that, ones' personality, perception and attitude toward his environment determines how stressful he is to be. That is, Stress is caused by how individuals respond to certain events in their lives not by the events themselves simply because each individual responds differently to the same event. Based on the research question two, Stress on the other hands also can be beneficial. American Medical Association (AMA), agreeing that Stress is also useful, emphasized that "Properly channeled, mild to moderate amounts of Stress can increase productivity and create solutions to problems; serve to motivate and stimulate, promote action towards change, give a sense of accomplishment, put an end to procrastination but when interferes with our functioning, we begin to experience harmful effects- feelings of helplessness, failure experiences etc when these negative effects continue, they lower the body's ability to cope with additional forms of Psychological or Physiological Stress which often lead to mental and physical exhaustion and ill-health". It implies that 'excessive, unhealthy stress' affects mental health; causing irrational thoughts and emotional damage in addition to physical ailments, reduces productivity, and

gives room for maladjusted relationships. Thus it has negative effects on the body and life. The results of the findings show that Stress is non avoidable in life. Research on this study realized that in life, up to 90 percent of ailments are Stress related. From the works of many researchers including that from hospital and personal interview, proved that many Medical, Emotional and Psychological conditions are caused by Stress. This was seen in the research carried out with some Patients, Visitors and Nurses in Jos University Teaching Hospital on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2021; whereby it was vividly shown that stress can lead to health and life hazard. Even in a discussion engaged with Patrick, a staff of National Veterinary Research Institute, Vom, on May 28, expessed that "all ailments man suffers are as a result of Stress and ignorance in managing the Stress". This indicates that it is the physical wear and tear of Stress that brings about damage to the cardiovascular and immune system of the body; suppressing it to compromise the ability to fight off diseases and infections.

Learning how to deal with Stress is a very important skill in life. So in order to lead a healthy life, learn to accept, define and cope with any Stress that comes in your life by first learning to recognize the warning signs of your body and intervene with healthy coping skills. Even life at static is not life Stress free. The key is your ability to manage the Stress positively. Decide to make a healthy living while you work and live.

### **Recommendations**

Every human under the earth undergoes moments of Stress in life. Are you overworking yourself? You lost a loved one? Have you been struggling getting over a sickness, not sleeping and eating well? Do you have problem with negative lifestyle? Are you facing possible bankruptcy? The paper suggests you learn to manage them. To ease your Stress based on Robert's method, - "IPDE method" (I- Identify; P - Predict; D -

Decide; E- Execute), when your body at function starts to give you strange languages or signs, Identify that you are under Stress, what really is the Stress and what causes you the Stress.

Predict what the Stress may cause to you if you don't do anything about it.

Decide what to do and how to go about it. Then, Execute and act on the most positive option that you can imagine.

Don't underestimate the problem (Stress) or your potential to cope with it creatively. No Stress is little and unimportant enough to ignore. Do something positive about it with a positive mental attitude to turn the situation into creative experiences. The study in addition recommends that individuals provide themselves good enticing environment for working and healthy living since at work, no man is indispensable; that the Institutions, Ministry of Education and Government should incorporate Stress and Stress Management Education in Staff welfare for Staff development and make the seminar/workshop compulsory for both private and public employees since Stress is an integral part of human life. Finally, that the Government should from time to time on health programmes organize enlightenment campaign on social medias to create awareness for the masses on the issues of Stress, enlightening them to know that Stress is unavoidable in life and that unhealthy and untreated Stress can result to health issues even death.

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