

## STRESS CAN LEAD TO CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

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**S**tress is something that affects all of us and when we do not take time to handle our stress, it can lead to some serious health issues.<sup>1</sup>

We face daily stressors in life as it is a reaction of our body to any change from outside or inside of the body which can be positive limited to a short period of time such as arranging an event, preparing for exam which can motivate us to study more or it can be negative when we hear about anyone suddenly feeling ill in family or an accident and some stressors when they persist for too long and generate due to lack of coping skills, begin to affect our physical wellness and mental wellness, with the first and immediate reactions being cardiovascular where heart rate goes up, blood pressure goes up and sweating starts or muscle spasm, and long term affects can cause damage to the arteries of the heart and the rest of body due to shear stress inside arteries, diabetes mellitus, anxiety and depression.<sup>2,3</sup>

These can certainly contribute to high blood pressure, can lead to adrenaline and cortisol secretions in our bodies which increase our cholesterol levels and can trigger insulin resistance which can lead to diabetes, smoking can be aggravated as for many smoking is a stress reducer though it's not a healthy stress reducer, emotional responses in eating and excessive stress increases craving for unhealthy food and that it can contribute to obesity. While stress from grief can trigger a problem known as stress induced cardiomyopathy (Takotsubo cardiomyopathy or "Broken Heart Syndrome")<sup>4</sup> mainly occurs in females aged 60 to 80 years, which cause temporary change in heart structure and its function, luckily more than 95% of patients do recover from stress induced cardiomyopathy with two or four weeks.

### **WHO IS MORE STRESSED?**

Women are more likely than men (28% vs. 20%) to report having a great deal of stress.<sup>5</sup>

### **HOW DO I MANAGE STRESS?**

The first steps is awareness and solely think about the present moment, engaging with the present moment, delaying judgment, paying attention to environment around us and following the basic stress management principles which are gratitude, compassion/love, acceptance, higher meaning, forgiveness.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Adequate healthy diet including more vitamin c, magnesium, omega, avoiding junk and fast food, adequate hydration, a healthy sleep cycle and adequate sleep of 6 to 8 hours per 24 hours, in which night sleep should not be replaced with day. Physical activity of 30 minutes in the form of walk or jogging keeps us not only physically fit but also mentally up to the mark. Talk to family members with whom you feel relaxed to share thoughts and feelings, use all senses to bring oneself back in present from past and future stressful thinking with the most important attempt is to involve your own self in others happiness to be relaxed.<sup>6,7</sup>

Proper follow up and care of long standing illness control of blood pressure, healthy lifestyle and engaging in healthy activities has a positive influence on life.

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