

Houston Music and Wellness Center

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HealthRHYTHMS Publish Research Summary

STRESS: IMPACT RESEARCH SUMMARY

Why should you take action to reduce stress in your life when everyone has stress? "Stress is really a component of every disease," says James Rosenbaum, MD. Take a look at the adverse health effects of chronic stress:

Cardiovascular illnesses. Chronic stress has been shown to increase the heart rate and blood pressure, making the heart work harder to produce the blood flow needed for bodily functions. Long-term elevations in blood pressure, also seen with essential hypertension (high blood pressure not related to stress), are harmful and can lead to myocardial infarction (heart attack), heart failure, abnormal heart rhythms, and stroke. (Journal of the American Medical Association, 2007)

Obesity. "We have known for over a decade that there is a connection between chronic stress and obesity," Herbert Herzog, PhD, of the Garvan Institute of Medical Research in Sydney, Australia, says in a news release. "We also know that NPY (a molecule the body releases when stressed) plays a major role in other chronic stress-induced conditions, such as susceptibility to infection. Now we have identified the exact pathway, or chain of molecular events, that links chronic stress with obesity." (WebMD Medical News, 2007) Excess abdominal fat and obesity are risk factors for heart disease and diabetes, and this type of fat secretes copious proinflammatory chemicals, worsening inflammation. (Arthritis Today, 2005)

Diabetes. Obesity is a leading cause of diabetes, but the chemical imbalances caused by stress, regardless of obesity, can also trigger type 2 diabetes development. Researchers at the University of Washington, Seattle, found that increased levels of fear, lack of control and depression raise levels of glucose and insulin, each of which are danger signs for diabetes.

Drug Abuse. Many clinicians and addiction medicine specialists suggest that stress is the number one cause of relapse to drug abuse, including smoking. Now, research is elucidating a scientific basis for these clinical observations. In both people and animals, stress leads to an increase in the brain levels of a peptide known as corticotropin releasing factor (CRF). The increased CRF levels in turn triggers a cascade of biological responses. (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2005)

Cognitive Impairment. Chronic stress can impair memory and may impair cognitive function. (McEwan B., Sapolsky R., 1995) Pioneering research of Bruce McEwen, PhD, head of the Neuroendocrinology laboratory at the world-renowned Rockefeller University in New York proposed that repeated stress can lead to the body's inability to turn off its major biological stress pathway; a factor that can directly lead to significant memory loss. (New England Journal of Medicine, 1998).

Chronic Pain. Stress alters neurotransmitters that regulate mood and emotion, leaving a person more susceptible to depression and anxiety. Depression can also worsen inflammatory conditions. For example, a study out of Stanford University Medical Center, Calif., discovered that people who are depressed experience two times more chronic pain than those who are not depressed.

Premature aging. Connections among stress, premature aging and decreased lifespan were recently identified in a University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) review of women, aged 20 to 50, who were caregivers to children living with a chronic illness, such as autism. Compared to women of the same age who were caring for healthy children, chronic stress levels speeded up the deterioration of vision and hearing, increased aging of the skin, mental decline and failing organs in the women caring for sick children. (Stein, R., 2004)

Depression. Recent estimates suggest that loss of a loved-one, and the physical/emotional changes associated with aging result in depression, a condition that is severely underestimated and present in about 65% of the elderly in our society. (Bittman, B., 2008) Researchers at the University of Washington and Group Health Center for Health Studies shows that depressed older adults use more health care services and have 43-56 percent higher health care costs than their peers who do not suffer from depression. (Sowers, P., 2003)

Published, peer-reviewed research has demonstrated that HealthRHYTHMS Group Empowerment Drumming significantly reduces stress, reduces burnout rates, improves mood states and increases natural killer cell activity.

Check out this new personal stress management tool - [Aroma Drum Workshop](#)