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| Introduction  Long lines at the bank. Rush hour traffic on the way home. Excessive homework at school. Living in today�s world sometimes just seems like too much to handle. Because of all this constant fatigue and pressure, living with stress has become a daily problem for most people. Some suffer more than others, but the one thing that rings clear is that stress has a major impact on our lives.  Back in September and November we spent several long nights trying to choose a  topic for our research project. We went through many ideas, including projects using  plants, electricity, and population studies. However, it would turn out that the thing that  had plagued us the most those days was going to be our ideal choice: stress.  Both of our lives tend to be very stressful, particularly in the beginning in of the  school year. We each play both a fall and spring varsity sport, not to mention a tough  workload at school. Stress is something that has always been there in both of our lives  and we were very eager to find out more about it through research. Not only would this  be a great topic for this particular project, but it would also be perfect for helping  ourselves to deal with these daily struggles we go through.  The obvious question now is what exactly is stress. Basically stress can come  from any event that goes on in someone�s life, whether it be having a big test or not  wanting to wake up early to go to school. Stress is quite simply put "the body and mind�s  reaction to normal or abnormal pressures of everyday living." (THINK) Good stress, also  known as eustress, could be anything pleasurable from a first kiss or doing good on a test.  Eustress is often a very helpful thing for people. It can serve as a basis for motivation to  do well, something many athletes use to their advantage. The opposite is known as  distress, which could come from getting rejected for a first kiss or doing really bad on a  test. The long term effects of distress can be very dangerous to the body.  Inside the body everyday trillions and trillions of messages are sent back and forth  from the brain to the rest of the body. Some of these messages illicit happy responses and  others sad responses. When something stressful is introduced into the body either the sad  or happy messages can be favored. Eustress would cause many more happy messages to  be sent, making the person feel very happy and healthy. These messages allow for the  release of certain "happy chemicals." These are known as serotonin (allows for sleep),  noradrenalin (provides energy), and dopamine (provides pleasure and pain). However,  when distress occurs the bad messages are favored and the person may suddenly very sad  or tired because of the lack of "happy chemicals" being distributed in the body.  The dictionary defines stress as �a mentally or emotionally disruptive or  disquieting influence.� This definition is correct except for one major detail. Stress is  more than just a mentally and emotionally harming problem, it is also known to cause  many different physical conditions. Changes in sleeping patterns and eating habits are  two of the most common ailments resulting from stress. Other stress related problems include migraine headaches, cold sores, fatigue, and even diabetes.  The actual basis of stress related illness stems from one simple methodology: the  Fight or Flight Response. When a person is met with some sort of challenge, or anything  else that might be new in their life they are met with the Fight or Flight Response. At this  point a persons� body is beginning to prepare them to deal with whatever is confronting  them. "Adrenaline and other stress hormones are produced, instigating the fight or flight  response which prepares your body to meet danger by utilizing its resources for  immediate physical activity." (THINK) Immediately following this is a series of reactions  in the body. They include:  S increased heart rate  S increased oxygen flow to brain and limbs  S increased breathing  S release of glucose into the bloodstream  S production of sweat  All of these reactions have some purpose to prepare the body for action. Once all this has  been done, the rest is left up to the person to do what they desire in the situation.  Following the Fight or Flight Response is what is known as the Resistance  Reaction. From this point the body begins to continue the reactionary process, even after  the event is over. The "adrenal cortex secretes hormones that control this reaction. Your  blood pressure is raised, protein is converted to energy and your body is better able to  perform strenuous work or fight off infection. There is a downside to this reaction,  however. If it lasts too long, serious disease may start to take hold and third and final  state of the stress response will take place: Exhaustion." (THINK)  Exhaustion is the point in which the body is fully feeling the after effects of too  much stress. The release of so many hormones and chemicals in the body causes a serious  imbalance. At this point the body is no longer able to efficiently deal with more stress. A  lack of potassium ions, phosphorous, and B vitamins are also created in the body,  severely hindering the ability of cells to survive. With such a depletion of vital substances  in the body, very serious problems can ensue. A list of these possible problems includes:  S asthma  S common cold  S diabetes  S depression  S fatigue  S headaches  S hypertension  S muscle aches  "People who are naturally prone to anxiety and low self-esteem are particularly  vulnerable to insomnia during times of stress, but even well-adjusted people will  experience sleep problems when confronted with a crisis or major life changes." (Losing  Sleep) The most common of stress-related problems is also the one we are most  interested in. Sleeping problems plagued both of us as we stayed up late those nights  last fall feeling stressed out. At the time we really didn�t think much of it, but with further  insight to the subject we have learned a lot more.  By doing research and reading books such as Losing Sleep and Burn Out we have  discovered many different causes of sleeping problems, but the overwhelmingly popular  cause cited was stress. Anybody can think of a story when they were up all night when  feeling stressed out, whether it be for dreading a test or mourning the loss of a loved one.  The lack of sleep when stressed out is scientifically caused by a lack of serotonin in the  body, a chemical that induces sleep. This deficiency is caused when the amount of  distress in one�s life is greater than the amount of eustress. In simpler terms, when you  are happy and feeling less negative stress you will sleep better. This is proven scientific  fact, but what we seek to do in this experiment is to see if that is the case with Amador  students. Is the Amador student body sleep-depraved and stressed like the majority of  Americans?  Many of the major studies done on stress in the past have involved very expensive  equipment and the close watch of very experienced, prestigious scientists and doctors.  Seeing how we did not have total access to either of those ingredients, we needed to  choose a more economical and practical method of finding results. Our immediate and  final response was to do a survey-based project.  The survey would have a series of questions regarding how stressed out a person  was, and how involved they are in certain activities that are well known as stress causing.  The questions would range from:  S Do you participate in sports?  S Do you take advanced classes?  S Are your parents separated/divorced/widowed?  S How much sleep do you get on the average each night?  S Do you eat a balanced diet?  S Do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend?  Each of the questions are carefully chosen to pick out common stressors in teens. Some  were borrowed from other surveys and tests and others were made up. By asking these  questions we hope to be able to find out the relationship between sleeping habits and  stress levels. The subject would be given plenty of time to read and fill out the survey and  would be asked to do so in an unbiased manner. Approximately 50-75 surveys should be  filled out by high school students and the results would be broken down statistically to  find correlations and major differences in the data.  Once again, it is our goal in this experiment to use the data we find to find out  which stressors seem to be the worst on teens and to find out ways to deal with it. We  hope that our experiment can be used to help those in need and that it will be taken  seriously.  "The concept of stress suggests that, in one way or another, we are continually faced  with the necessity of adapting to all the various pressures we experience in life. Basically  this means adapting to *change*. If we can learn to see change as an integral part of life and  not as a threat to our well-being, we will be in a much better position to cope effectively  with stress."  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