

Concept of Stress in General and Homoeopathy in Particular

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ABSTRACT

Life would be simple indeed if all of our needs were automatically satisfied. In reality, however many obstacles both personal and environmental, prevent this ideal situation. Such obstacles place adjustive demands on us and can lead to stress. The term Stress has typically been used to refer both to the adjustive demands placed on an organism and to the organism's internal biological and psychological responses to such demands. In spite of numerous disagreements on the definition of Stress the term 'Stress' has been used persistently and widely in specialties such as biology, health science, and social science. In recent years Stress is defined as a transactional or interactional concept. Transactionally stress is viewed as the state of affairs arising when a person relates to situations in certain ways. People are not disturbed by situations but by the ways they appraise and react to situations. In stress a demand exceeds a person's coping abilities resulting in reaction such as disturbances of cognition, emotion, and behavior. Homoeopathy is a system of medicine based on the concept of individualization. We treat the person not the patient. An attempt has been made in this article to understand the concept of stress from homoeopathic point of view.

KEYWORDS: Stress and Homoeopathy, Concept of Stress, Stressors, Homoeopathy and Stress, How to understand stress according to Homoeopathy

INTRODUCTION

Life would be simple indeed if all of our needs were automatically satisfied. In reality, however many obstacles both personal and environmental, prevent this ideal situation. Such obstacles place adjustive demands on us and can lead to stress. The term Stress has typically been used to refer both to the adjustive demands placed on an organism and to the organism's internal biological and psychological responses to such demands.

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resulting in reaction such as disturbances of cognition, emotion, and behavior.

Dictionary Meaning:

The word **Stress** has Latin origin. This word has been derived from the word **Strictus** that indicates to draw together.

- Strain or straining force, a force exerted upon a body that tends to strain or deform its shape.
- Mental or physical tension or strain.
- Reaction of body forces of a deleterious nature, infection and various abnormal states that tend to disturb its normal physiologic equilibrium. [Homoeostasis].
- In psychology a physical or psychological stimulus such as very high heat, public criticism or another noxious agent when impinging upon certain individuals, produces psychological strain or disequilibrium.

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Definition:

According to Neufeld stress is a by-product of poor or inadequate coping.

Historical Evolution Of Stress:

Walter B Canon used the term stress in both a physiologic and a Psychologic sense as early as 1914. He applied the engineering concept of stress and strain in a physiologic context. He believed that emotional stimuli were also capable of causing stress.

Hans Selye in 1946 popularized these same findings, viewing stress as a biologic phenomenon.

In 1950 it was investigated that stress might be influence the immunity and resistance to disease.

In the study of 1970 it was founded that life changes or emotions resulting from life changes were associated with decreased immune function.

More recently we have seen the interactions among social, Psychologic and biologic factors in causing and prolonging or shortening the course of disease. This will give rise to a more holistic and complex model of molecular biology, immunology, neurology endocrinology and behavioral science. This model gives promotes the biochemical relationships of all such systems. As a result a new field **Psychoneuroimmunology** has developed.

Responsible Factors For Stress:

Factors, which are responsible for the production or giving rise to Stress, are known as **Stressors**. The root sources of Stressors are **Frustration, Conflicts and Pressure**.

A. Frustration: Whenever the strivings of an individual are not achieved either by obstacles that block progress toward a desired goal or by the absence of an appropriate goal, frustration occurs. Frustration can be particularly difficult for a person to cope with because they often lead to self-devaluation making the person feel that he or she has failed in some way or is incompetent. This effect will give rise to birth of Stress.

B. Conflicts: In many cases stress results from the simultaneous occurrence of two or more incompatible needs or motives. The requirements of one preclude satisfaction of the others. In certain cases we have a choice to make selection. This will give rise to a state of conflict. How we categorize conflicts will represent a major source of stress.

C. Pressure: Stress may arise from pressures to achieve specific goals or to behave in particular ways. In general pressure force us to speed up, intensify effort or change the direction of goal-

oriented behavior. In some cases pressure seriously taxes our coping resources and if they become excessive they may lead to maladaptive behavior.

Factors Predisposing a Person to Stress:

The severity of stress is gauged by the degree to which it disrupts functioning. The actual degree of disruption that occurs is partly depending on stressors characteristics and partly on a person's resources. The factors that predispose individuals to react poorly to external demands are:

A. Nature of the Stressor:

The impact of stressor depends on a wide range of factors. Such factors include importance of stressor to person, the duration of stressor, appearance of stressors with other stressors, whether the stressor is natural or artificial etc. The longer a stressors operates, the more severe it effects. Encountering a number of stressors at the same time also makes a difference. This encountering results in to severe stress.

B. The experience of crisis:

The term crisis is used when an individual approaches to a stressful situation. Such crisis is often stressful because the stressors are so potent that the coping techniques do not work. The outcome of such crisis has a profound influence on a person's subsequent adjustment. If a crisis leads a person to develop effective new method of coping, perhaps joining a social group, he or she may emerge from the crisis even better adjusted than before.

C. Changes Of Life:

Changes of the life, even some positive changes like getting a desired promotion or getting married, place new demands on us etc are responsible for giving rise to stress. The faster the changes the greater the stress.

D. A Person's Perception of the Stressors:

The different reactions given by different people for the similar situation is due to their different perception regarding the similar situation. A person who feels overwhelmed and is concerned that she or he will be unable to deal with a stressor is more likely to experience negative consequences from the situation than a person who feels able to manage it.

E. The Individual's Stress Tolerance:

The term Stress Tolerance indicates an individual's capacity to withstand stress without becoming seriously impaired. An individual's learning history plays a crucial part in this general capacity to deal with stress. Early traumatic experiences can leave a person especially vulnerable to or especially able to handle certain stressors.

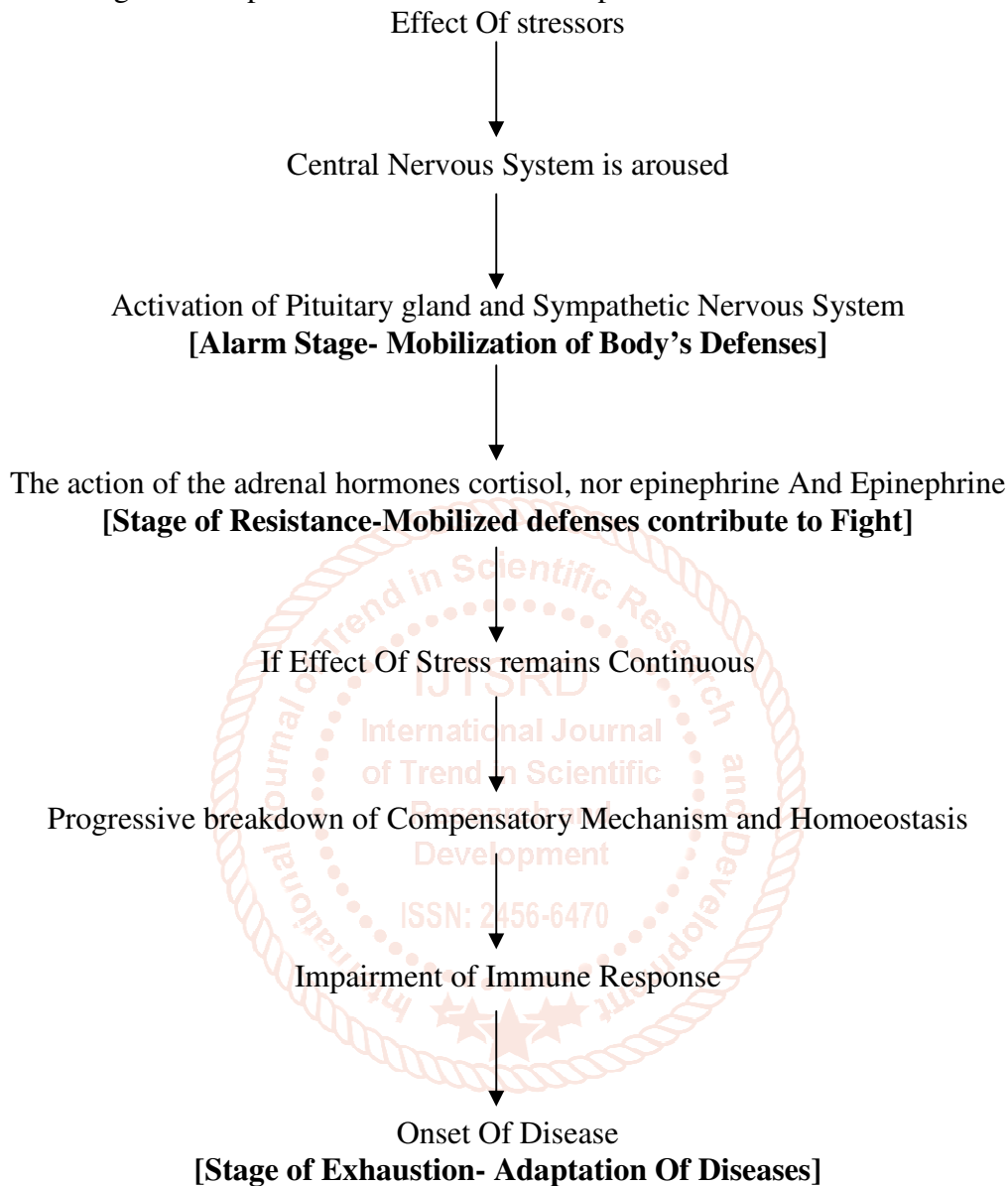
F. A Lack of External Resources and Social Supports:

Certain considerable evidence suggest that positive social and family relationship can moderate the effects

of stress on a person and can even reduce illness and early death. The lack of external supports can make a given stressor more potent and weaken a person's capacity to cope with it.

Basic Understanding Of Mechanism of Disease production in relation to Stressors:

Different successive stages developed in an individual as a response to noxious stimuli are:



The Stress Response:

A. Psychoneuroimmunologic Regulation:

It is a study of how the consciousness [Psycho], brain and central nervous system [Neuron] and body's defense against external infection and abnormal cell division interact. According to this system all immune mediated disease results from interrelationship among psychological, emotional, genetic, neurologic, endocrine and immune system and behavioral factors. Stressors can elicit the stress response through the action of the nervous and endocrine system, specifically corticotrophin releasing factor from hypothalamus, the sympathetic nervous system, the pituitary gland and the adrenal gland.

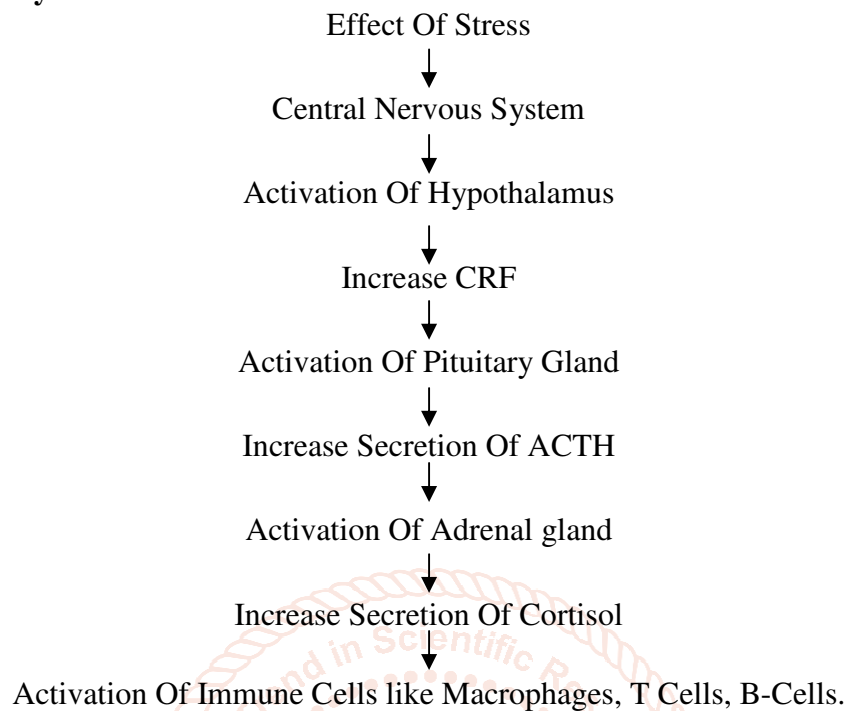
The sympathetic nervous system stimulates the release of norepinephrine throughout the brain, promoting arousal, increased vigilance, increased anxiety and other protective emotional responses. Reproduction, growth and thyroid hormone are suppressed during stress.

B. Neuroendocrine Regulation:

The sympathetic nervous system is aroused during the stress response and causes medulla of the adrenal gland to release catecholamines [epinephrine, norepinephrine and dopamine] in to blood stream. Simultaneously hypothalamic corticotrophin releasing factor stimulates the pituitary gland to release a variety of hormones,

including ant diuretic hormone from the posterior pituitary gland and prolactin, growth hormone and adrenocorticotropin hormone [ACTH] from the anterior pituitary gland. ACTH stimulates the cortex of adrenal gland to release cortisol.

C. Role Of Immune System and Stress:



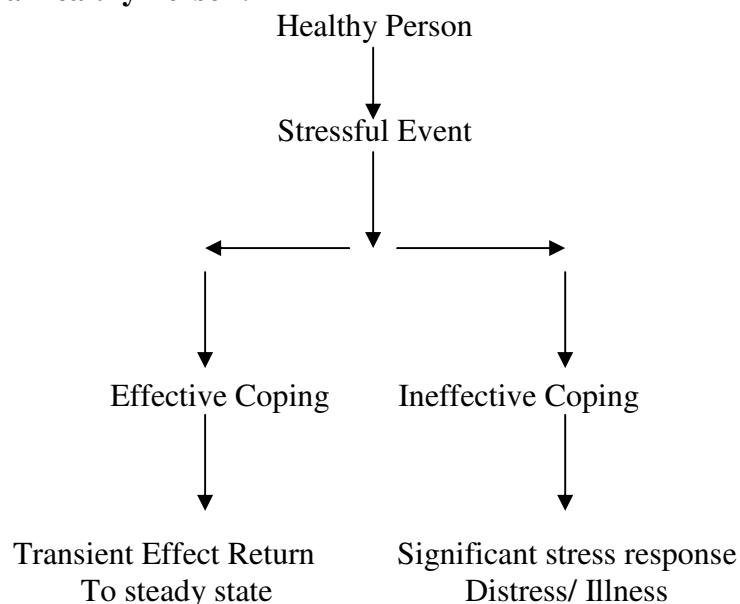
Coping With Stress:

Increase level of stress threaten a person's well being and produce automatic, persistent attempts to relieve the tension. In short stress forces a person to do something. Coping is the process of managing stressful demands and challenges that are taxing or exceeding the individual's resources. Sometime inner factors such as person's frame of preference, motives, and stress tolerance play the dominant role in determining his or her coping strategies. For example a person who has successfully handled adversity in the past may be better equipped to deal with similar problems in the future. At other times environmental conditions such as social demands and expectations are of primary importance. In coping with stress and individual has to deal with two challenges:

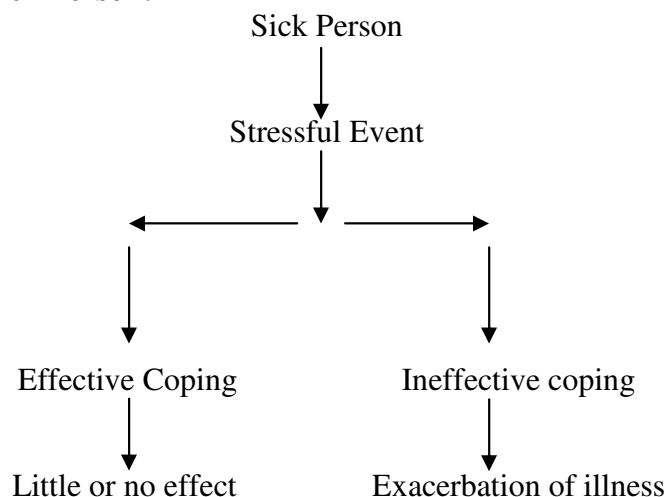
1. To meet the requirements of the stressor.
2. To protect oneself from Psychological damage and disorganization.

The extent to which an individual uses effective positive coping strategies determines the degree of successful response of the stress challenge. Similarly negative coping approach may lead to development of disease condition.

Stress and Response Of a Healthy Person:



Stress and Response Of a Sick Person:

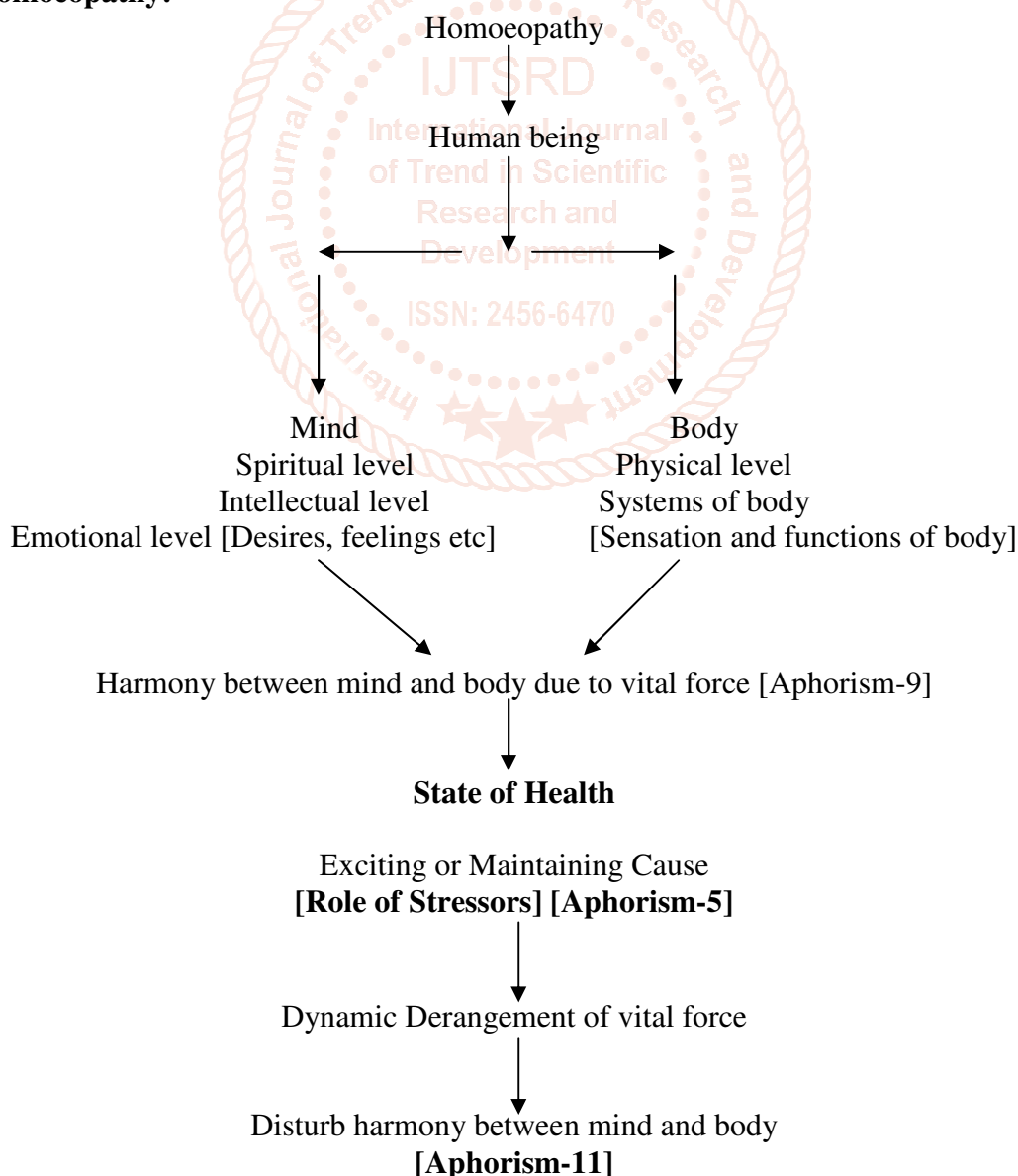


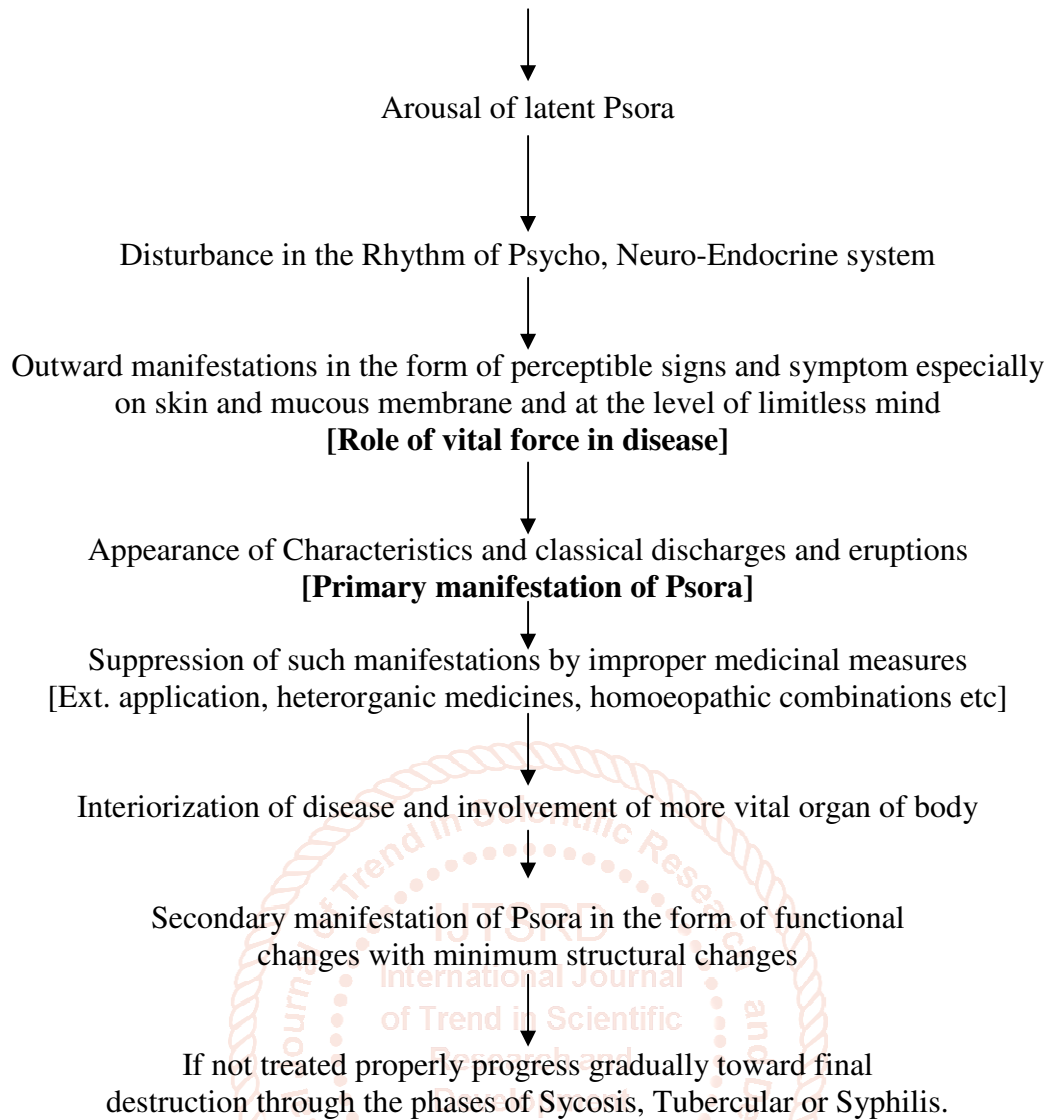
On the basis of certain general principles we may say that there are three interactional level of coping.

1. Psychological level and interpersonal level
2. On a biological level- immunological responses and damage repair mechanism.
3. Socio cultural level

The failure of coping efforts on any of these levels may seriously increase a person's vulnerability on other levels.

Stress and Homoeopathy:





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