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Management of Stress and Physician Wellness

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Management of stress and Physician Wellness

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Agenda

- 45-60 minutes recorded lecture
 - Review of the stress reaction
 - Discussion
 - Management of patient stress
 - Discussion
 - Physician wellness
 - Discussion
- 45-60 minutes for discussion
 - Questions
 - Case examples and consultation

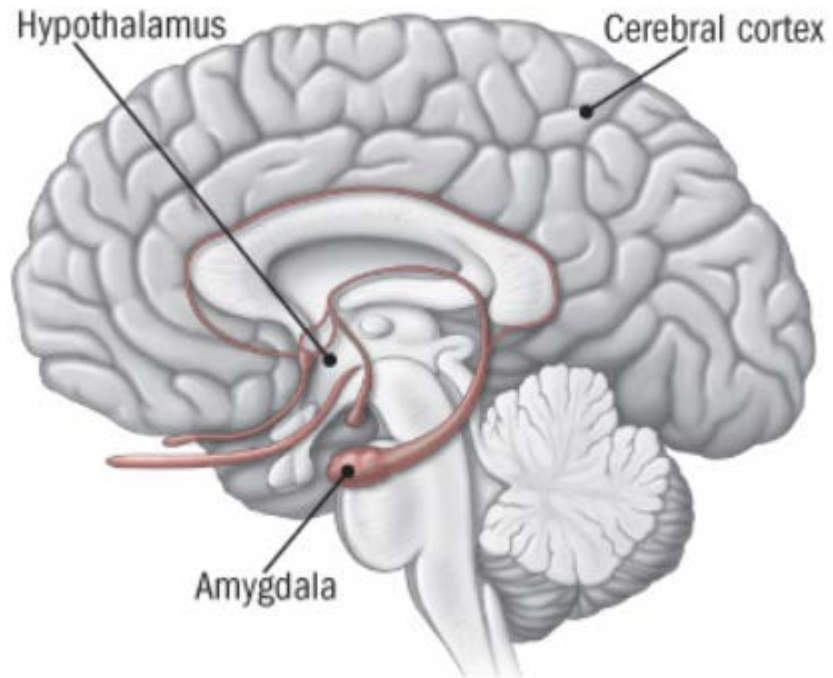
Review of the stress response

Quiz!

The stress response involves both the sympathetic and the parasympathetic nervous system.

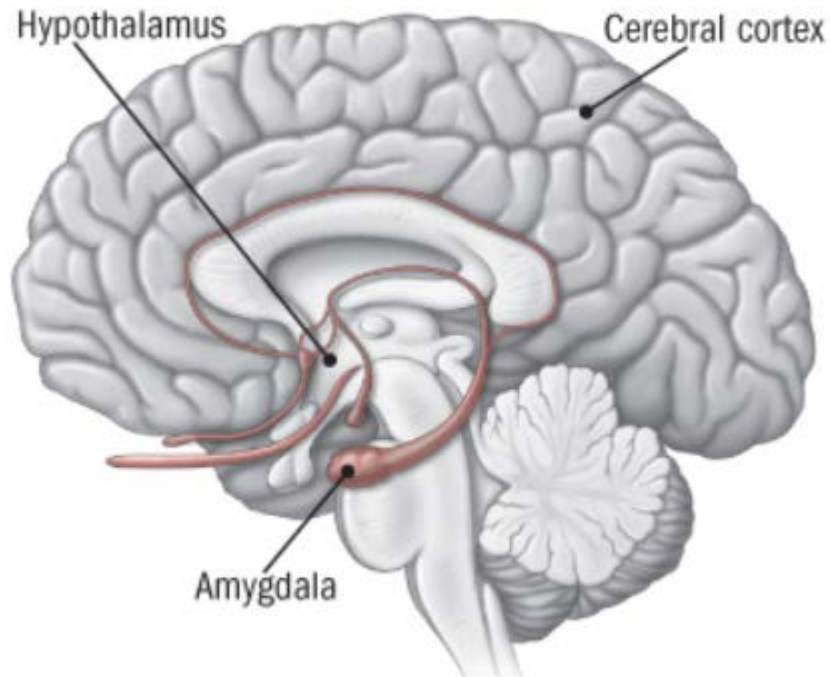
- Sympathetic nervous system
 - “Fight or flight”
 - Arousal of the system
- Parasympathetic nervous system
 - “Rest and digest”
 - Calming
 - Conserves energy

Stress response



- Amygdala
 - Contributes to emotional processing

Stress response



- Adrenal glands and Epinephrine
 - Heart rate increases
 - Blood pressure increases
 - Breathing becomes more rapid
 - Extra oxygen is sent to the brain
 - Release of glucose and fats from storage

What health conditions might
this impact?

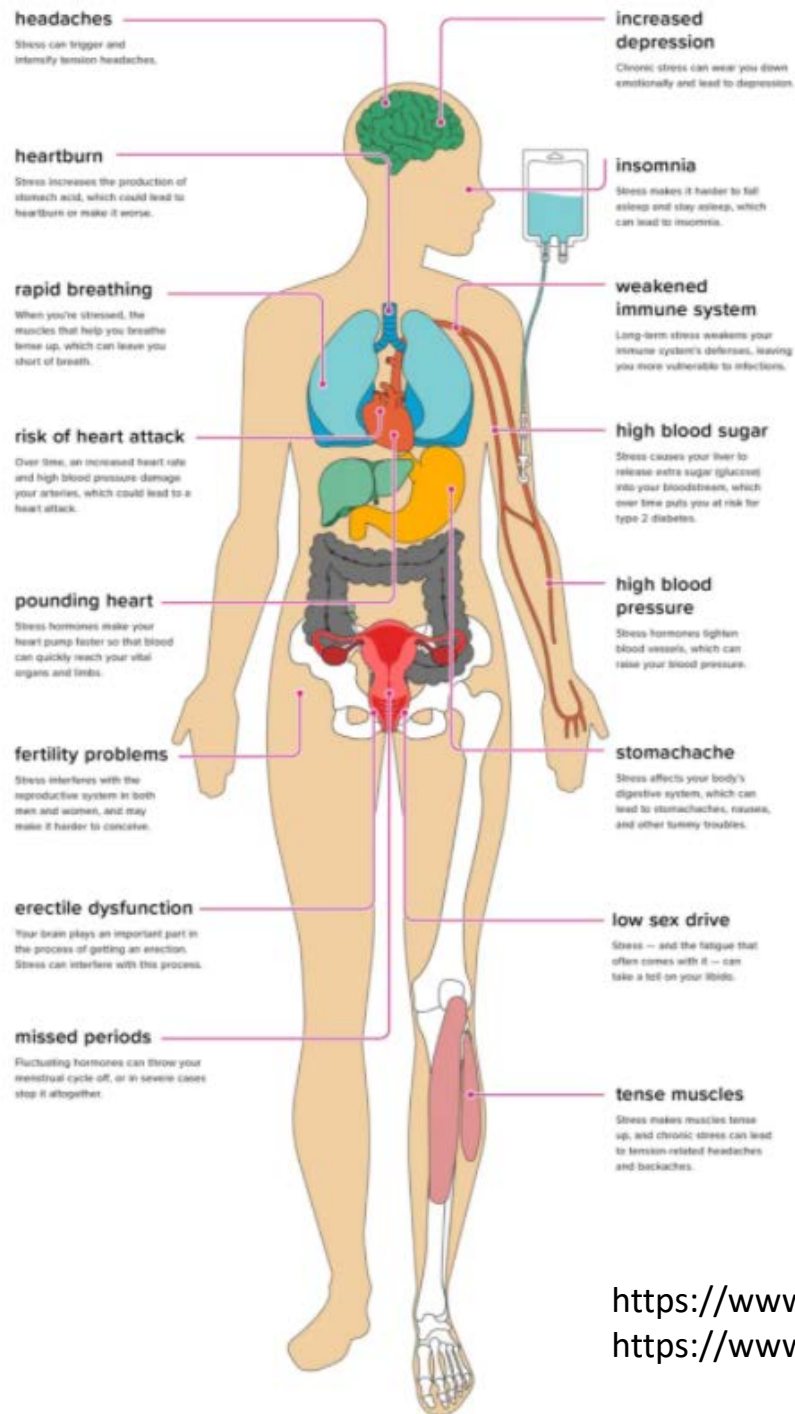
Health conditions impacted by stress

Physical health

- Hypertension
- Diabetes
- Chronic pain
- Headaches
- Gastrointestinal problems
- Sexual functioning
- Immune response

Mental/Social health

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Substance use
- Anger/irritability
- Family dynamics



Common effects of stress

On your body	On your mood	On your behavior
Headache	Anxiety	Overeating or undereating
Muscle tension or pain	Restlessness	Angry outbursts
Chest pain	Lack of motivation or focus	Drug or alcohol misuse
Fatigue	Feeling overwhelmed	Tobacco use
Change in sex drive	Irritability or anger	Social withdrawal
Stomach upset	Sadness or depression	Exercising less often
Sleep problems		

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress-symptoms/art-20050987>

<https://www.healthline.com/health/stress/effects-on-body#1>

Questions?

Management of patient stress

Management of patient stress

- Problem solving logistical factors
 - Financial
 - Family
 - Comorbid conditions and medical treatment
 - Education
 - What else??
- Healthy nervous system
 - Long-term
 - Exercise
 - Diet
 - More short-term
 - Relaxation response (parasympathetic nervous system response)

What is the Relaxation Response?

- First think about teaching patient about “fight or flight” response and how that might apply to their particular condition (pain, anxiety, etc.)
- Helps to activate parasympathetic nervous system “the calming system”
- Opposite effect from the sympathetic nervous system, allowing the body to “rest and digest”

How might you explain the stress response to a patient?

What Changes?

- The relaxation response causes:
 - Decreased oxygen demand
 - Lowered heart rate
 - Lowered blood pressure
 - Lowered respiratory rate

What Changes?

- The relaxation response causes:
 - Decreased oxygen demand
 - Lowered heart rate
 - Lowered blood pressure
 - Lowered respiratory rate
- Does not change situational sources of stress, does not remove logistical challenges
 - But it is a part of the response that we can have some control over

Expanding your Toolbox as a Provider

- Relaxation strategies allow you to influence your patients with words
 - Can be a way to focus on relationship building
- Represents a way of stress relief that is easily adaptable and suitable in inpatient setting and at home
- Increases self-care and self-efficacy for patients
- Best to teach them and encourage patient to practice so they can help themselves

What Can This Help With?

- Pain
- Anxiety
- Childbirth
- IBS
- Migraines
- Tension
- Sleep
- COPD
- Anything else?

Diaphragmatic or Belly Breathing

- Sit or lie in a comfortable position, legs shoulder width apart, eyes closed, jaw relaxed, arms loose.
- Place one hand on your chest, one hand on your stomach.
- Try to breathe so that only your stomach rises and falls. Breathe with your nose only.
 - Inhale: Concentrate on keeping your chest relatively still. Imagine you are trying to hold up a pair of pants that are slightly too big.
 - Exhale: Allow your stomach to fall as if you are melting into your chair/bed. Repeat the word “calm” to provide focus as you are practicing the exercise.
- Take several deep breaths moving only your stomach in and out with the breath. Match the length of you inhale to the length of your exhale (or double it), 4 or 3 seconds inhale, and 6 seconds exhale
- Practice 3-5 minutes daily until the breathing feels comfortable.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- Tighten and then relax muscle groups moving from feet up to face
- Check in advance for problems with cramping or pain
- Emphasis on noticing the relaxed state
- Can also do a body scan and just focus on relaxing each muscle group from feet to face

Imagery

- Often used in combination with diaphragmatic breathing
- Warn to avoid when driving
- Work with patient to identify their preference

- Pleasant imagery
 - Go to a relaxing place in your mind, describe everything you see, hear, touch, taste, and smell
 - Use all 5 senses to envision your comfortable and peaceful scene
- Pain control
 - We know that mental focus on pain can lead to increased pain, so focusing on it in an intentional way can also bring relief
 - Imagine pain as “red-hot” turning to “blue-cool,” or a muscle “knot” working its way out to a “smooth line”

Distraction and Mindfulness Techniques

- Focal Point Technique

- Focus on one point in a room (e.g., painting, bookshelf, etc.)
- Describe the image to yourself in detail (e.g., colors, how many books, etc.)
- Talk to yourself about that one spot
- Breathe!

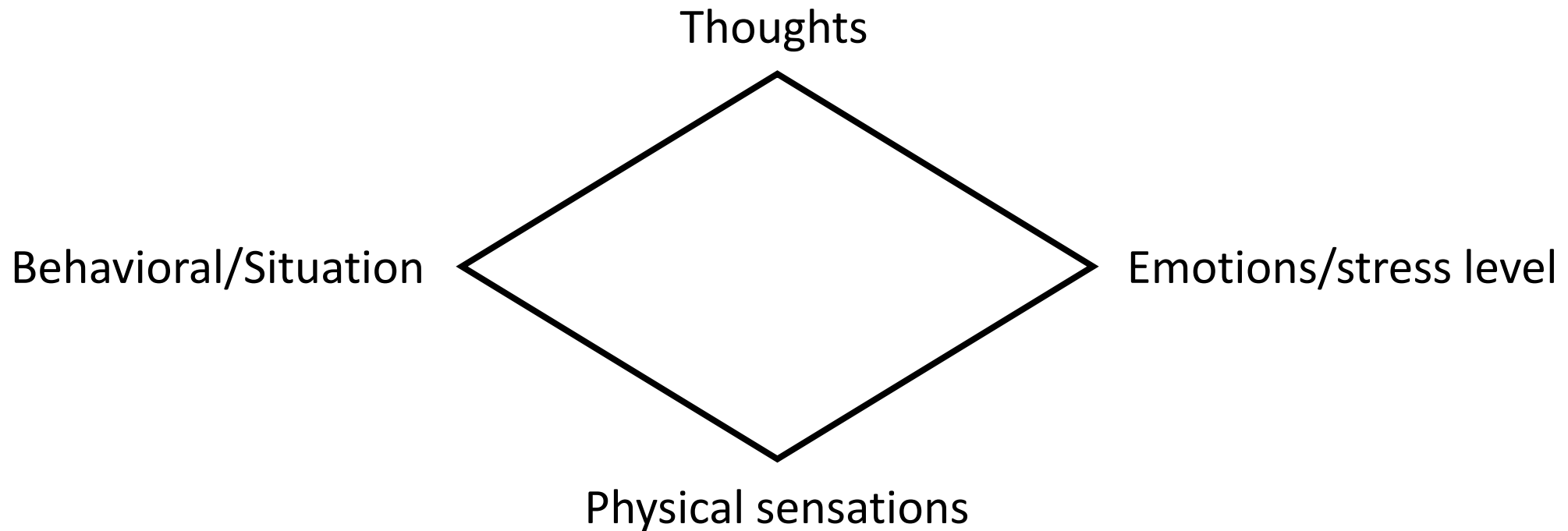
- 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 - grounding using 5 senses (5 things you can see, 4 things you can feel, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, 1 thing you can taste) – can modify this in different ways

- Counting

- In your imagination: count and imagine each number in order on a contrasting background
- In a room: Count tiles on a ceiling, freckles on your arm, or the number of blue objects in a room

Advanced counseling techniques

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy



Discussion/Questions

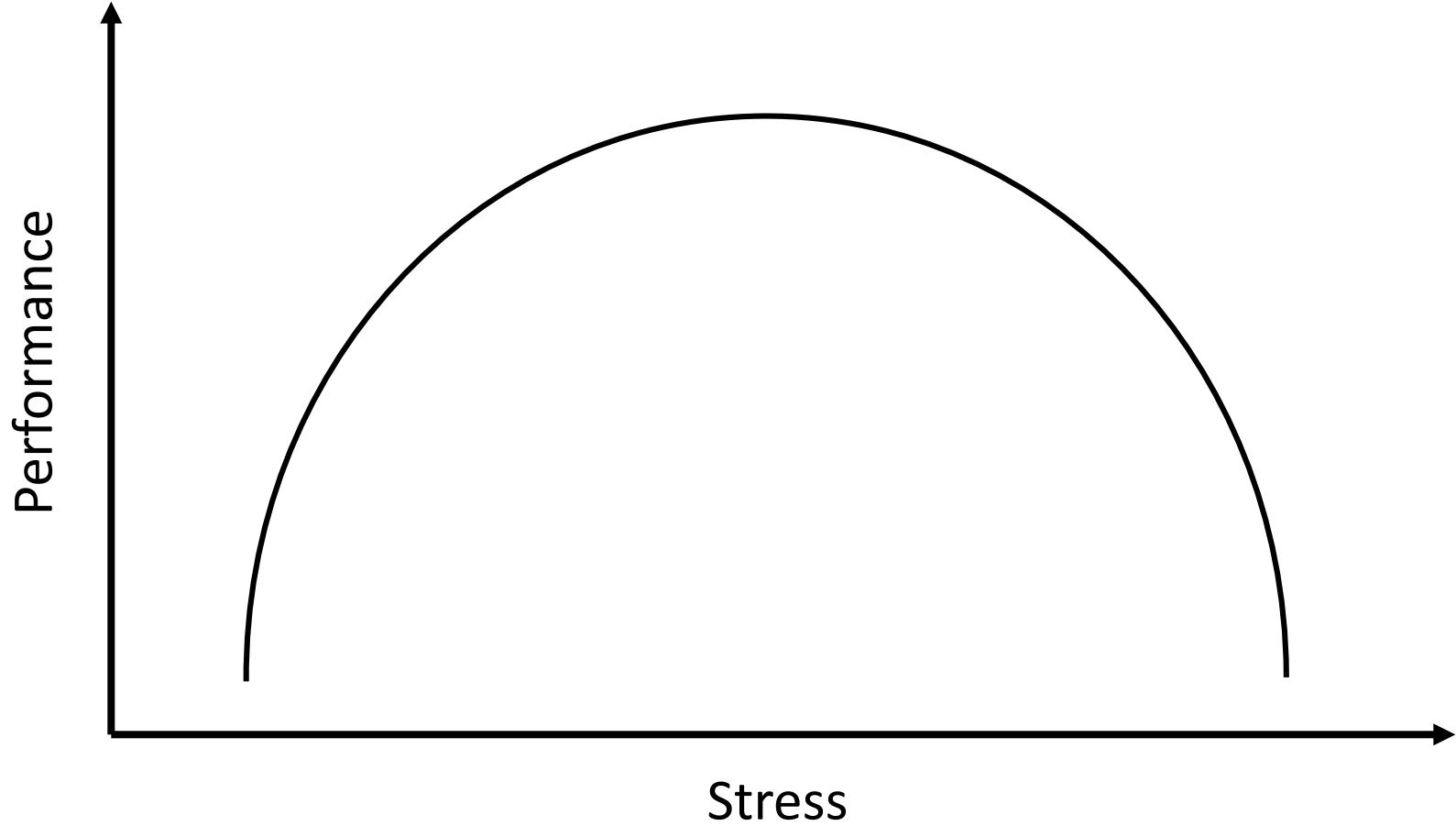
Physician wellness

...why is it important?

Physician wellness

- You are subject to the stress response as well
 - Importance of caring for physical and mental health
- Coping with day-to-day stress of practicing medicine
- In addition to physical and mental health, stress impacts performance
- Impact on patient care

Yerkes-Dodson Law



Physician burnout

- Characterized by...
 - Emotional exhaustion
 - Depersonalization (negative or detached feelings towards patients)
 - Sense of reduced accomplishment in day-to-day work
- Consequences for patient care
 - Increased medical errors
 - Reduced patient satisfaction
 - Efficiency

Patel, R. S., Bachu, R., Adikey, A., Malik, M., & Shah,, 8 M. (2018). Factors related to physician burnout and its consequences: a review. *Behavioral Sciences* (11), 98.

What challenges do you face?

What strategies do you use to cope with the stress of work?

Questions/Discussion