

NEWSLTR

The Workplace Wellness Conference and Exhibition

In this issue:

Anxiety and stress in the workplace

Speaker Highlight

Mike Licon, Ph.D.

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It is evident that stress is part and parcel of life; all living creatures must react to threatening situations appropriately.

A life without stressors and stress would be unnatural and dull. Stress cannot be divorced from life, just as birth, death, food, and love are inseparable. Stress is a natural occurrence and is how the brain and body respond to extreme or constant threatening situations. Everyone experiences stress now and again. Moreover, everyone handles stress differently. It is important to note that **all types** of stress carry mental and physical risks.

Stress is a chain of neuroendocrine mechanisms. The mechanical stress process begins when the brain signals the adrenal glands to release adrenaline and cortisol hormones. The heartbeat rises, and the blood supply increases to areas of the body anticipating work.

Stress can result from everyday responsibilities at work or home, serious life events, a loved one's death, regional, natural and worldwide concerns like the Covid-19 scare, or a war. Short-term stress can be good, but in the long term, not so good.

Short-term stress can positively affect awareness and performance; examples include an interview, an exam, or a dangerous situation. The body reacts to stress by releasing hormones that ready the body

by increasing heart rate and breathing rate and preparing muscles to respond.

When the cause of stress diminishes, all systems should go back to normal. If not, the situation worsens, and the body suffers. During the stress response, breathing becomes faster, and the heart pumps faster to quickly distribute oxygen-rich blood to the body. Stress hormones will cause the blood vessels to constrict and divert more oxygen to muscles, so there is more strength to take action.

Speaker Highlight



Mike Licona, Ph.D.

Mike Licona is a professor, author, lecturer, and public speaker. Mike was elected to membership in the prestigious Society for New Testament Studies. He has spoken on more than 100 university campuses and has appeared on dozens of radio and television programs.

Chronic stress or stress that happens often requires the heart to work harder and longer. When the blood pressure rises, so do the risks. If stress continues after the danger has subsided, then a situation called chronic stress occurs. With chronic stress, the body can interfere with sleep patterns, digestion, the immune system, and the reproductive system.

Five things to know about stress

1. The liver produces extra blood sugar (glucose) to boost energy. The extra blood sugar released by the liver increases the risk of type-2 diabetes.
2. The digestive system is affected. Stress can induce heartburn or acid reflux. Stress by itself does not cause ulcers; the bacteria *H.pylori* does. However, stress can cause an ulcer to act up.
3. Overeating or not eating enough, alcohol or drug abuse, and social withdrawal.
4. Muscles are also affected by stress. If the muscles cannot relax, they become tight. Tight muscles can cause body aches and headaches.
5. Stress also affects testosterone and menstrual cycles. Testosterone levels may drop, and menstrual cycles can amplify.

Examples of chronic stress include:

- irritability
- anxiety
- depression
- headaches
- insomnia

Stress can be managed in many ways depending on the source, for example:

- Exercise thirty minutes per day.
- Check-in with your doctor
- Prioritize your task list and set achievable goals
- Relax and try stress-reducing programs like stretching, yoga, and swimming.
- You can learn more about stress at the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) (www.nccih.nih.gov/health/stress).
- Increase human interaction with friends and relatives who will support you.
- Get involved with the church and missionaries.

Immediately seek help if you have suicidal thoughts or use drugs or alcohol to cope. Resources are available at www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp.

Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
800-273-8255

Most people experience stress and anxiety from time to time. Stress is any demand placed on your brain or physical body. People can report feeling stressed when multiple competing demands are placed on them. The feeling of being stressed can be triggered by an event that makes you feel frustrated or nervous. Anxiety is a feeling of fear, worry, or unease. It can be a reaction to stress, or it can occur in people who are unable to identify significant stressors in their life.

Stress and anxiety are not always bad. In the short term, they can help you overcome a challenge or dangerous situation. If we did not experience some



anxiety we might not be motivated to do things that we need to do. However, if stress and anxiety begin interfering with your daily life, it may indicate a more serious issue.