

# Integrated Lab Report APSY 605 Winter 2010

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## Synopsis

Qualitative data was retrieved through a focus group - analysis of commonalities  
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 Quantitative data was collected through an online survey addressing their response to stress and strategies used  
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 Results yielded that men and women identified different stressors in common and responded to their stressors in different manors.  
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 Links to literature suggest women will seek social supports in expressing their responses to stress and men will internalize their responses.

## Problem Statement & Research Questions

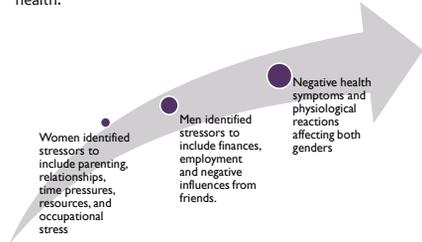
According to a group of research students taking a research course at the U of C:

Men and women will perceive stress differently and consequently have different responses to the stress they feel in their lives.

- **What are the types of situations men and women find most stressful?**
  - Personal illness, parenting, relationships, finances, educational responsibilities, aging, social support networks etc...
- **How do men and women respond to stressful situations?**
  - Physical activity, leisure activity, relaxation strategies, self-reflection, routines, organizational activities, healthy diet etc...
- **What strategies do men and women access in order to deal with stress?**
  - Implement a diet and fitness program, and seek professional medical advice and emotional and social supports etc...

## Literature Review

- Individuals report stress as a common theme in their lives (Statistics Canada, 2004).
- Identified stressors affecting men and women and the effects on health.



## Literature Review

- Both genders experience negative health symptoms (Weekes, MacLean, & Berger, 2005)
- Responses to stress include; implementing a fitness and exercise program and seek medical attention through emotional supports.



## Lab 1 : Focus Group

Female Respondent	Female Respondent	Female Respondent	Female Respondent	Male Respondent
"Lots of things cause stress in my life, what's causing me stress right now is illness, with my children and my husband. We all get a little bit stressed and worried in the house about getting better and taking care of ourselves".	"What affects my feeling of stress goes back to my personal reserves at the moment, like how I'm feeling health wise and emotionally. How many situations I have to deal with at the moment can change how I feel about the stress, whether I feel that I can manage it or if there is a bazillion things that I need to be doing. This can cause me to feel overwhelmed".	"I definitely turn to people I know that may understand the situation or will listen to me talk about my stressful day. I definitely feel that team work helps me deal with stressful situations and so I definitely agree that a support system of close friends and family are important to how a person responds to stress".	"Self reflection is beneficial for me in how it affects the way I feel about a stressful situation. Some time upon self reflecting upon a situation it allows me to work it out and lessen the stress".	"One thing I do when it is quite minor is I chew my finger nails, (laugh) I know it's a bad habit but it is something I have always done every time I get in to a stressful situation that is quite minor. When it becomes a more major stressful situation I have trouble sleeping and I just can't get things off my mind and so that's how I respond to stress".

## Lab 2: Survey

Sources	Responses	Coping	Moderators
Education Work Finances	Neg. effect on physical health Sleep/eat patterns change Worry & anxiety	Organizational strategies Leisure activities	Past experience Understanding how stress affects self Time to respond # of stressors
Time Perceptions Sudden stress	Feel Emotional	Self-reflection Routines Healthy nutrition Social support	Maturity/age Priority change Confidence Ability Social support Current responsibilities
Personal illness	avoidance	Physical activity	

shared

female

male

## Integration & Synthesis of Findings

- Health, relationships, work & school are common causes of stress
- Support networks, physical and mental health, perceptions, affect feelings of stress, and impact competencies to manage stress
- Different stressors result in different physical and psychological responses
- Research supports findings: women's use of social support, stress 'proliferation', greater stressor exposure for women, and gender differences within common stressors and responses.

## Implications & Future Research

Sample Representation

Generalizability

Factors not controlled

Stress Measures

Bias

Research Experience

Professional Knowledge

Equal Gender Sample

Examine Individual Variables

Expand Stress Variables

In-depth Investigation

Personal Interviews

New Areas of Study

## Conclusion

Stress is a common experience...



To an extent gender differences in stress exposure and responses contribute to individual stress, prevention, and management.

## References

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