WEEKLY EPIDEMIOLOGICAL REPORT

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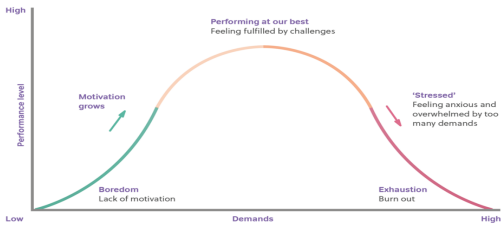
Stress, academic stress and maintaining work-life balance Part I

This is the first article of a series of 2 articles on the "Stress, academic stress and maintaining work-life balance".

Stress refers to the feeling of pressure that arises when a person faces problems or demands that seem overwhelming. While a moderate level of stress can be beneficial and help one perform well under pressure, excessive stress can have negative consequences on a person's physical and emotional well-being.



Source: MindWell 2023

Figure 1: Stress Curve

The stress curve is a visual representation of how stress can affect a person. It illustrates how performance levels can increase, peak, and then decline as demands rise. For instance, when demands are low, one may experience boredom and a lack of motivation, which can negatively affect performance. Conversely, as demands increase, individuals tend to become busier and more motivated, often performing at their best when they find themselves at the peak of the curve.

However, if demands continue to rise beyond a person's limit, a person's performance can start to decline, and they may begin to feel exhausted, anxious, and overwhelmed. This is particularly true if the demands remain high, ultimately leading to burnout.

The stress curve applies to any demands or challenges a person faces in their life, whether at work or outside of it. Whether they are studying, in relationships, or dealing with life events, demands can put pressure on individuals.

While stress can be healthy and necessary to keep people motivated and on track, excessive stress can be detrimental, making it harder to focus and get things done. Therefore, it's important to manage stress levels and recognize when demands become too much to handle.

Therefore, stress is a normal part of life, and managing it effectively is essential for maintaining a person's physical and emotional well-being.

Academic stress

As the future of society, students' mental health and well-being are essential not only for their own sake but also for the larger community's well-being. Unfortunately, academic stress has become a common experience among university students. With classes, assignments, exams, and extracurricular activities, it's easy to feel overwhelmed by the demands of academic life, and finding a balance between academic success and personal well-being can be a challenge.

Academic stress is a pervasive problem that affects students from different countries, cultures, and ethnic groups. It can have a devastating impact on students' mental health and well-being, leading to a range of negative consequences, such as anxiety, depression, and burnout.

Manifestation of stress

Stress triggers a physiological response in the body, causing the 'fight or flight' reaction, which is the same regardless of the trigger. Whether it's exam anxiety or work stress, the body's response to stress is identical.

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Stress can affect how a person feels and behaves, and high levels of stress can manifest in various ways. Some signs of stress include feeling dizzy, tense, or 'on edge,' getting easily upset or angry, experiencing deeper or shallower breathing, having a dry mouth, and having difficulty concentrating on tasks or tackling problems that cause stress. Additionally, stress can also cause physical symptoms such as headaches, migraines, diarrhoea, and rapid breathing

Physical signs of chronic stress (long-term stress) include stiff, tense shoulder muscles, sweating, loss of appetite or comfort eating, difficulty relaxing or sleeping, trouble taking in or remembering information, withdrawing from people or usual activities and hobbies, and increasing alcohol consumption or smoking too much.

It's essential to recognize these signs of stress and take steps to manage stress effectively. By addressing stress early, one can prevent it from escalating and negatively impacting a person's mental and physical health.

Causes of stress among university students

University life can be a daunting experience for many students due to the high levels of academic demands, extracurricular activities, and social obligations. These factors can lead to academic stress and make it challenging to maintain a work-life balance. Additionally, the transition to university life itself can be stressful, as students adjust to new routines and responsibilities, and face new academic and social challenges, creating a stressful environment, especially when combined with the pressure to succeed and uncertainty about the future

While the stress response may be identical, individuals' sources of stress can vary. Academic stress can result from various factors, including academic demands, fear of failure, time management challenges, peer pressure, and perfectionism. Managing multiple assignments, exams, and projects can make it difficult to keep up with coursework, leading to anxiety and stress. The pressure to achieve high grades can create academic stress, particularly for students concerned about their future career prospects, maintaining scholarships, or meeting parental expectations.

Many students struggle with time management challenges, trying to balance academics with extracurricular activities and social commitments. The pressure to fit everything into a busy schedule can be overwhelming and lead to burnout. Furthermore, some students grapple with perfectionism, striving for the perfect grade or assignment, which can result in feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt.

The educational system also plays a role in contributing to students' stress levels. Some sources of stress include overcrowded lecture halls, inadequate resources and facilities, extensive syllabi, long hours, and an emphasis on rote learning. Parents and institutions may also instil the fear of failure relentlessly, affecting self-esteem and confidence, and ultimately leading to increased stress levels. Elevated expectations are among the factors responsible for the high-stress levels experienced by students. Overall, it is crucial to identify the sources of stress and develop strategies to manage it effectively to maintain good mental health and academic success.

Other mental health issues encountered due to chronic stress

In addition to the aforementioned problems, chronic stress can lead to various mental health issues such as burnout, anxiety, depression and addictions.

Chronic stress can also exacerbate pre-existing mental health conditions, and can also lead to physical health problems such as high blood pressure, heart disease, and gastrointestinal disorders.

Chronic stress can also affect a person's cognitive functioning, such as attention, memory, and decision-making abilities. Furthermore, it can impact their social and emotional functioning, such as relationships with family and friends, and their ability to regulate emotions.

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Table 1 : Water Quality Surveillance
Number of microbiological water samples September 2023

District	MOH areas	No: Expected *	No: Received
Colombo	15	90	**0**
Gampaha	15	90	**NR**
Kalutara	12	72	**79**
Kalutara NIHS	2	12	**16**
Kandy	23	138	**49**
Matale	13	78	**0**
Nuwara Eliya	13	78	**25**
Galle	20	120	**84**
Matara	17	102	**73**
Hambantota	12	72	**32**
Jaffna	12	72	**83**
Kilinochchi	4	24	**5**
Mannar	5	30	**0**
Vavuniya	4	24	**49**
Mullatvu	5	30	**34**
Batticaloa	14	84	**0**
Ampara	7	42	**0**
Trincomalee	11	66	**0**
Kurunegala	29	174	**NR**
Puttalam	13	78	**NR**
Anuradhapura	19	114	**2**
Polonnaruwa	7	42	**19**
Badulla	16	96	**NR**
Moneragala	11	66	**0**
Rathnapura	18	108	**NR**
Kegalle	11	66	**31**
Kalmunai	13	78	**19**

* No of samples expected (6 / MOH area / Month)
NR = Return not received

to be continued ...

Table 1: Selected notifiable diseases reported by Medical Officers of Health 07th- 13th Oct 2023 (41st Week)

RDHS	Dengue Fever		Dysentery		Encephalit		Enteric Fever		Food Poi-		Leptospirosis		Typhus		Viral		Human		Chickenpox		Meningitis		Leishmania-		WRCD	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	T*	C**
Colombo	103	11869	0	15	1	14	0	2	0	12	5	286	0	0	1	6	0	0	7	289	0	39	0	6	**41**	**100**
Gampaha	90	11924	0	21	0	16	1	8	2	8	9	502	0	10	0	17	0	0	9	256	4	112	0	43	**10**	**100**
Kalutara	193	23793	0	36	1	30	1	10	2	20	14	788	0	10	1	23	0	0	16	545	4	151	0	49	**34**	**100**
Kandy	139	6507	3	37	1	3	0	10	2	21	8	263	2	59	1	4	0	2	11	262	0	24	0	26	**90**	**100**
Matale	30	1425	0	4	0	3	0	1	0	29	4	133	0	14	0	7	0	0	2	57	1	8	5	276	**28**	**100**
NuwaraEliya	5	249	2	139	1	5	0	3	0	49	6	149	2	67	0	5	0	0	6	170	1	28	0	3	**62**	**100**
Galle	68	2505	0	45	0	13	0	6	1	33	16	810	0	72	0	2	0	1	10	315	1	27	0	3	**39**	**100**
Hambantota	8	1295	0	11	0	3	0	1	0	9	13	277	0	68	0	9	0	0	3	135	1	20	11	556	**33**	**100**
Matara	36	1693	0	25	0	8	0	1	0	19	9	466	0	32	0	5	0	2	9	276	0	21	9	173	**59**	**100**
Jaffna	22	2106	5	96	0	2	0	12	1	33	0	12	4	516	0	5	0	2	2	165	0	18	0	2	**69**	**93**
Kilinochchi	0	89	0	12	0	0	0	1	0	16	0	8	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	19	0	2	0	0	**40**	**100**
Mannar	2	85	0	6	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	36	0	6	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	9	0	1	**54**	**100**
Vavuniya	3	160	1	11	0	1	0	0	1	24	0	30	1	9	0	2	0	0	4	28	0	13	0	10	**18**	**100**
Mullaitivu	3	121	1	14	0	1	0	4	0	12	2	38	0	6	0	1	0	0	1	18	0	2	1	8	**28**	**100**
Batticaloa	7	2178	3	175	0	8	0	5	0	18	2	87	0	1	0	8	0	3	10	111	1	37	0	1	**68**	**100**
Ampara	2	230	0	9	0	1	0	1	0	53	0	120	0	2	0	2	0	0	4	78	4	55	3	12	**14**	**100**
Trincomalee	6	2013	3	25	0	1	0	1	0	67	0	66	0	15	0	3	0	0	2	69	0	29	0	7	**32**	**100**
Kurunegala	24	2694	1	42	1	16	0	1	0	7	8	355	0	17	0	12	0	2	8	470	3	187	9	482	**30**	**100**
Puttalam	10	2909	1	33	0	3	0	1	0	2	1	84	0	8	0	1	0	0	5	102	1	67	0	19	**29**	**100**
Anuradhapur	3	692	0	13	0	1	0	1	0	8	2	253	0	31	0	4	0	2	5	221	0	43	22	561	**31**	**100**
Polonnaruwa	5	536	0	15	0	6	0	1	0	11	4	160	0	7	0	13	0	0	2	79	0	18	18	379	**38**	**100**
Badulla	26	1020	0	37	0	5	0	0	0	44	4	313	2	55	2	85	0	0	9	165	0	45	0	39	**68**	**100**
Monaragala	13	646	1	23	0	6	0	0	0	8	7	479	0	36	9	33	0	1	1	65	1	75	4	166	**31**	**100**
Ratnapura	27	1988	2	47	1	17	0	3	2	50	32	1074	0	27	1	18	0	2	5	194	5	138	2	172	**37**	**100**
Kegalle	33	2759	0	25	0	2	0	2	1	16	18	613	0	42	0	6	0	0	8	404	1	81	0	39	**35**	**100**
Kalmune	4	1698	1	68	0	10	0	0	0	1	3	55	0	1	0	0	0	0	17	142	2	38	0	0	**53**	**100**
SRILANKA	**705**	**63620**	**25**	**972**	**5**	**149**	**1**	**67**	**10**	**568**	**168**	**7427**	**11**	**1110**	**14**	**259**	**0**	**18**	**156**	**4551**	**28**	**1226**	**85**	**2987**	**43**	**99**

Source: Weekly Returns of Communicable Diseases (esurvillance.epid.gov.lk). T=Timeliness refers to returns received on or before 13th Oct, 2023 Total number of reporting units 358 Number of reporting units data provided for the current week: 355 **C****-Completeness

Table 2: Vaccine-Preventable Diseases & AFP

07th– 13th Oct 2023 (41st Week)

Disease	No. of Cases by Province									Number of cases during current week in 2023	Number of cases during same week in 2022	Total number of cases to date in 2023	Total number of cases to date in 2022	Difference between the number of cases to date in 2023 & 2022
	W	C	S	N	E	NW	NC	U	Sab					
AFP*	00	01	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	03	74	63	17.4 %
Diphtheria	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	0 %
Mumps	03	00	00	01	00	00	00	00	01	05	02	196	72	172.2 %
Measles	15	04	03	03	00	07	00	00	03	35	02	621	19	3168.4 %
Rubella	00	00	01	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	00	07	00	0 %
CRS**	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	02	00	0 %
Tetanus	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	06	05	20 %
Neonatal Tetanus	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	0 %
Japanese Enceph-alitis	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	02	01	100 %
Whooping Cough	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	07	01	600 %
Tuberculosis	101	17	32	17	23	33	09	05	07	244	155	7362	5255	40.1%

Key to Table 1 & 2

Provinces: **W**: Western, **C**: Central, **S**: Southern, **N**: North, **E**: East, **NC**: North Central, **NW**: North Western, **U**: Uva, **Sab**: Sabaragamuwa.

RDHS Divisions: **CB**: Colombo, **GM**: Gampaha, **KL**: Kalutara, **KD**: Kandy, **ML**: Matale, **NE**: Nuwara Eliya, **GL**: Galle, **HB**: Hambantota, **MT**: Matara, **JF**: Jaffna, **KN**: Killinochchi, **MN**: Mannar, **VA**: Vavuniya, **MU**: Mullaitivu, **BT**: Batticaloa, **AM**: Ampara, **TR**: Trincomalee, **KM**: Kalmunai, **KR**: Kurunegala, **PU**: Puttalam, **AP**: Anuradhapura, **PO**: Polonnaruwa, **BD**: Badulla, **MO**: Moneragala, **RP**: Ratnapura, **KG**: Kegalle.

Data Sources:

Weekly Return of Communicable Diseases: Diphtheria, Measles, Tetanus, Neonatal Tetanus, Whooping Cough, Chickenpox, Meningitis, Mumps., Rubella, CRS,

Special Surveillance: AFP* (Acute Flaccid Paralysis), Japanese Encephalitis

CRS =**Congenital Rubella Syndrome

NA = Not Available

Influenza Surveillance in Sentinel Hospitals - ILI & SARI							
Month	Human				Animal		
	No Total	No Positive	Infl A	Infl B	Pooled samples	Serum Samples	Positives
August							
Source: Medical Research Institute & Veterinary Research Institute							

Comments and contributions for publication in the WER Sri Lanka are welcome. However, the editor reserves the right to accept or reject items for publication. All correspondence should be mailed to The Editor, WER Sri Lanka, Epidemiological Unit, P.O. Box 1567, Colombo or sent by E-mail to **chepid@sltnet.lk. Prior approval should be obtained from the Epidemiology Unit before publishing data in this publication**

ON STATE SERVICE

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