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Rushi

Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, India

Fungal infections: Mental health perspective

Exposure to chronic stress experienced by many people can have profound and enduring effects on our mental and physical health. Psychological factors both influence and are influenced by physical functioning (Jones, 2006; Ryffa et al., 2006). Although occasional stress may not impair our health, chronic or repetitive stress can eventually weaken the body's immune system (Epstein, 2003; Kemeny, 2003). A weakened immune system increases our susceptibility to many illnesses, including the common cold and the flu, and may increase the risk of developing chronic diseases, including cancer. Psychological stress has been found to suppress cell-mediated immune responses that are important for limiting the proliferation of *Candida albicans*. Fluoxetine has been observed to reduce negative consequences of stress on the immune system in experimental and clinical models. History of *Candida* yeast infections has been found to be more common in a group of men with schizophrenia or bipolar disorder than in those without these disorders. Recent studies have shown that elevated stress levels can cause *Candida* yeast infections. When you become stressed, your body releases more of a hormone called Cortisol. This hormone can weaken the immune system, and at the same time, cause elevated levels of blood sugar. Since yeast feeds off of sugar, it is able to grow much quicker than normal. As our bodies become unable to fight off *Candida*, because of low immunity which gets affected by stress, the yeast may turn into a fungus that can be very harmful. Eliminating stress from your life will greatly reduce the chance of getting a yeast infection. How to eliminate and cope up with stress and how to cope up with the consequences and psychological factors of various fungal infections will be discussed.

Biography

Currently working as Associate Professor and HOD, Department of Clinical Psychology, PGIMER-Dr RML Hospital, New Delhi from 11th May 2015. Nature of work is Teaching, Clinical and Research and Administrative. Worked as Assistant Professor, rehabilitation Psychology, at National Institute for Mentally Handicapped (NIMH), Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi from 3-10-14 to 8-05-15. Nature of work consisted of Teaching and Training & Clinical and Research. Worked as Assistant Professor, Clinical Psychology, Department of Psychiatry, GMCH, Chandigarh since 18th April 2013 till 1st October 2014, where nature of work consisted of Teaching, Research and Clinical. Worked as "Clinical Psychologist" at Institute of Human Behaviour & Allied Sciences (IHBAS), Delhi, India, since 10th March 2007 to 17th April 2013, where work Experience consisted of Clinical, Teaching, Research and administrative. Worked as Research Officer in the ICMR - Multi Site Task Force project named "Urban Mental Health Programme", at Institute of Human Behaviour & Allied Sciences (IHBAS), 10th Feb 2006 – 9th April 2007. Nature of work experience consisted of Administrative, Research and Clinical.

rushi_arshad@hotmail.com