

## MANAGER, MANAGERIAL STRESS AND SPORTS RECREATION

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**Abstract:** *The complexity of the manager's tasks creates permanent neuro-muscular tension, which in turn causes fatigue and stress as unavoidable consequences of intellectual work. Sports recreation as a means for dealing with intellectual fatigue and stress becomes the basic remedy in the modern business world, especially for managers.*

*This paper analyzes the sources and causes of managerial stress and the ways to overcome it. The importance of sports recreation, which is a very effective means for fighting fatigue and stress, has been emphasized. In this way, each manager's efficiency can be significantly improved.*

**Key words:** *manager, fatigue, stress, sports recreation*

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### 1 INTRODUCTION

Although fatigue is a consequence of all types of human physical and psychological activities, it particularly affects people on managerial positions and positions that bring a lot of responsibility – i.e. managers.

Fatigue as a phenomenon can be examined from several aspects. First and foremost, it is a medical phenomenon, so most texts about fatigue can be found in medical literature. Fatigue has also been studied by many psychologists and psychiatrists, and we will often find texts on that topic by scientists from the domain of sports recreation, who observe fatigue from that aspect [1]

Regardless of the way in which we observe fatigue as a phenomenon, there is no doubt that it causes stress and that not reacting to the feeling of fatigue is actually the first stage of stress.

### 2 OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE SYMPTOMS OF FATIGUE

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, I. M. Sečenov posited the following central-neural fatigue hypothesis: “The source of the feeling of fatigue is usually looked for in working muscles, but I find it exclusively in the nervous system.” [2]

It is known that the nerve cell represents the source of motor impulses and trophic influences. During the process of muscle work, in both the nerve cell and working organs – muscles – the sources of energy are being spent and the conditions of the internal environment of the body are being changed. That is why during the increase of fatigue the state of the nerve cell depends on the processes that are occurring both in the nerve cell and at the periphery, i.e. in the working

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organs. Deteriorated supply of blood to the muscles, the decrease of enzymes' activity, biochemical and biophysical changes in receptors and contractible muscle structures, disorder of hormonal functions of the endocrinal apparatus and the tissues' thirst for oxygen play a significant role in the fatigue increase; in many cases, the decrease of the intensity of activity of vegetative systems while they are working, especially of glands of internal secretion, has preventive character because it prevents the organism from further exhaustion, and it does not occur as the result of complete exhaustion of energy sources.

Thus, fatigue occurs as the consequence of a complex interconnection among peripheral, hormonal and central-nervous factors, where the latter ones have the dominant importance, while the role of individual factors in the development of fatigue during different types of muscle activity can be uneven. Thus, it is important to discover all the weak links in the series of physiological processes which give out first [3]

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| Earlier  | Later   |
|--|---|
| Tension, trembling   | Reduced response to sudden sound irritations in the form of jerking, jumping, etc.                    |
| Increased reaction to sudden sound irritations in the form of jerking, jumping, etc.   | Confusion, depression, afraidness   |
| Increased desire to consume alcohol and tobacco  | Lamentation on the comrades and superiors   |
| Increased interest in the opposite sex   | Lack of interest, flight, attention and memory  |
| Irritability, searching for someone else's mistakes and excessive criticism  | Reduced personal neatness and cleanliness   |
| Concern and irritability   | Social retreat, a person becomes an object for jokes to comrades or they consider him a nasty "silly" |
| Scattering and the emergence of new preoccupations   | Tics  |
| Indiscipline such as failure to meet regular obligations (without objective causes), unnecessary risks in work, avoiding conversations with others, etc. | Stutter   |
|  | Extrasystoles   |

Table 1: Objective symptoms of chronic fatigue [4]

| Earlier   | Later  |
|---|--|
| Vague headaches   | Unclear vision and hearing disorders   |
| Loss of appetite  | Unclear sensations in the chest: pain in the left chest, breathing difficulty, palpitation of the heart. |
| Diarrheas   | Problems with urinating (high concentration and urine acidity)   |
| Increased urine secretion   | Food digestion disorders and constipation  |
| Physical exhaustion:<br>a) which occurs after night rest (acute aging)<br>b) which is maintained despite a good rest during several consecutive nights (chronic form) | Unclear pain and unpleasant feelings in the limbs  |
|   | Insomnia and restlessness  |
|   | Lack of ability for longer concentration   |
|   | Reducing interest in the opposite sex  |
|   | Sudden unconsciousness   |

Table 2: Subjective symptoms of chronic fatigue [4]

### 3 MANAGERIAL STRESS

The most common definition of stress that psychologists quote is: “stress is a state of prolonged tension which causes physiological and psychosomatic reactions whose consequences are the deterioration of the body’s health conditions, the feeling of frustration, and mental and physical exhaustion.”

Within the domain of their activities, each manager encounters the following situations daily: rapprochement of conflicting interests, balancing poor interpersonal relationships within an organization, continuous communication with everyone and at every level, solving conflicts, organizing and controlling human resources. We are wondering: how do managers usually find solutions for all such problems while remaining “healthy” persons with strong motivation that pushes them towards achieving the set goals of the organization?

*“God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.” (Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović)*

This popular Serenity Prayer in many ways reflects the formula for success at performing managerial functions, and the application of that principle gives solid postulates for preventing managerial stress.

However, stress has its positive sides which stimulate managers and give them motivation for overcoming all difficulties and for continuing with their activities. Every managerial challenge is followed by the increase of the secretion of adrenaline into the bloodstream by adrenal glands, which stimulates the improvement of physical abilities, and most of all of psychological abilities, which makes people more efficient and more effective, more powerful and wiser [5]. Great managers often say that they are most successful at their job when they have the most

obligations and when their schedule is completely filled with managerial tasks and obligations [1].

### 3.1 SOURCES AND CAUSES OF STRESS

The sources and causes of managerial stress can be found everywhere in managerial line of work, and not only at the workplace. Stressors (the causes of stress) can be classified in a few categories [6]:

1. work conditions and work environment in general;
2. interpersonal relationships within an organization and in the surroundings;
3. permanent responsibility and preoccupation with business activities;
4. lack of active rest and hypokinesia;
5. presence of aggression as a managerial characteristic;
6. exaggerated devotion to building managerial career;
7. lack of optimism and positive feelings in managerial personality.

Stress occurs when the manager encounters a problem that requires “stepping out” of his behavioral stereotypes and taking actions and measures for which he himself cannot find justifications. In other words, throwing managers off balance made up of his usual reactions to problems causes stress [7].

However, today, nobody is spared when it comes to stressful situations. If you have some goals in life, if you are trying to achieve something, or even if you are trying to fulfill basic needs, you will be exposed to various stressors which will stimulate you to succeed and to achieve the set goals. When stress is observed from that aspect, it gets a positive dimension, and as such it is desirable when it comes to every person, and thus also when it comes to every manager [1]

### 3.2 WAYS OF OVERCOMING STRESS

The ways of overcoming stress or preventing it from occurring can be defined through forms of subjective influence on one's personal characteristics, one's actions and self-analysis, and on forms of motor activities by applying various contents of sports recreation with the goal of preventing or overcoming stressful situations [8].

We are going to list some of the examples of preventing and eliminating stress:

- *self-analysis* –

1. know the true nature of your personality,
2. know your temperament and the prevailing feelings,
3. identify the strengths of your personality (fear and audacity),
4. know your reactions to unexpected stressful situations.

- *self-improvement* –

1. identify stressors (situations and personalities),
2. recognize problems you can solve,
3. recognize unsolvable situations,
4. control your reaction to stressful situations,
5. accumulate psychological balance of your personality in case there is stress,
6. maintain the level of your psychological stability in case the stress occurs.

- *managerial aspect*–

1. make the employees speak openly about the problems within the organization, about their objections and suggestions,

2. conduct sociometric test and identify the structure of the social group within your organization (potential leaders, homogenous or heterogeneous cliques within the organization's staff, different sectors etc.),
  3. encourage creativity and innovation of the organization's employees,
  4. provide continuous training that enables the employees to react properly to stressful situations within the organization,
  5. define achievable and sensible goals of the organization,
  6. analyze your decisions continuously, and especially analyze the structure of the management (have we placed the right people on the right positions?),
  7. define with precision the criteria for advancement and rewarding within the company,
  8. try to identify the extremes within the organization,
  9. continuously analyze, check and control the interpersonal relationships within the organization,
- *subjective estimation of the situation and reacting* –
1. ask yourself if the problem is really that important,
  2. talk about the problem with a person of confidence,
  3. think about the positive aspects of the solution to the problem,
  4. relegate minor problems to the lower levels of the management,
  5. always solve the gravest problem first,
  6. confront the problem immediately, without hesitation,
  7. do not pay too much attention to other people's criticism (especially coming from the people whom you do not esteem),
  8. teach yourself to disconnect from the problem when you wish to,
  9. never blame other people for your failure.

Besides the listed advice for taking action in stressful situations, we must mention “the most important” resource, which undoubtedly, at least from our point of view, has countless positive effects when it comes to preventing and eliminating managerial stress. That resource is SPORTS RECREATION.

#### 4 SPORTS RECREATION FOR FIGHTING STRESS

Sports recreation enables us to maintain the functioning of all functional systems of the body at a high level, to prevent aging, and to influence subjective feelings of the users of sports recreational programs [8].

If we remind ourselves that we have defined health as “the absence of illness” and as a high level of homeostasis of organs and organ systems, and if we know that the cause of stress is precisely the discontinuity in the functioning of organ systems, then it is easy to draw a conclusion that sports recreation is a fundamental resource for preventing fatigue of any man, and especially of managers.

It is widely known that fatigue happens the moment when an organism is not anymore capable of functioning in accordance with its

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usual activities and processes due to the pressure on certain systems (when it comes to managers, most often on central nervous system) and their super functions.

Consequently, managers must possess a defense system against fatigue, which will be supported daily by regular sports recreational activities, which will enable them to prevent the occurrence of fatigue in every moment. That is why the optimal form of physical exercise for managers are programed forms of sports recreation, which will improve their physical state through increased psycho-physiological challenge and decrease the possibility of the occurrence of acute and chronic fatigue, or stress.

**Doing programed sports recreational activities daily (regularly) causes the following indications:**

- improvement of the functioning of the cardio-vascular system, first and foremost through functioning of the hearth and the bloodstream, increase of the hearth volume, as well as balancing blood pressure and decrease of the arteriosclerosis index;
- improvement of the functioning of the respiratory system within crease of the vital capacity of the lungs and of oxygen consumption;
- improvement of all metabolic processes in the body;
- improvement of the functioning of the central nervous system, which significantly influences the decrease of potential stress;
- improvement of the levels of all motor dimensions of the personality: strength, speed, coordination, elasticity, agility, stamina etc.;
- the increase of muscle mass and muscle tonus, and the increase of work ability;
- decrease of the levels of cholesterol in blood and of all increased parameters that harm a person's health;
- establishing hormonal regulation of the functions of the body and of the organ systems;
- decrease of extra bodyweight by decreasing the fat tissue.

Besides the listed improvements of the functioning of the body and the organ systems of the users of active rest, it has been proved that after six months of doing sports recreationally it is possible to decrease psychological tension and irritability by about 60 %, to decrease headaches by about 40 %, and to decrease dizziness by about 30 %. The data refer to people who are middle-aged or older [9].

## **5 CONCLUSION**

One of the most important changes that are the result of regular physical exercise is the improvement of aerobic endurance, which results in better hearth functioning. It is especially interesting that by regular use of programed sports recreational activities we create better oxidation of the brain cells and a whole series of other beneficial effects inside the brain.

Physical and intellectual exertion are in high correlation, so their effects are the same. In other words, by developing physical abilities we also develop our mental health and emotional reactions.

Regular sports recreation is becoming a “cultural image” in the contemporary society. What is especially evident is the increase of the number of amenities for sports recreation within business premises of companies, where managers have the chance to use programs for sports recreation during breaks (ex: “mini programs with targeted purpose”), to ensure the



accumulation of “new energy” that will enable them to continue their work, and thus overcome fatigue and prevent managerial stress.

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