

Strategies to prevent burnout in leaders in academic medicine

Mark Hyman Rapaport MD
Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science
Emory University School of Medicine

A LITTLE ABOUT THE BIOLOGY OF STRESS

INDIVIDUAL VARIATION

Ancestral environment prior to conception affects behavior of descendant generations

F0 female rats exposed to fungicide – Mate preference affected in F3 generation

Transgenerational epigenetic imprints on mate preference

David Crews^a, Andrea C. Gore^{a,b}, Timothy S. Hou^a, Nygerma L. Dangleben^a, Michael Spinetta^a, Timothy Schaller^a, Matthew D. Anway^a, and Michael K. Skinner^a

PLoS ONE 2007

Social defeat of F0 male mice – F1 generation showed depression-like behavior

Paternal Transmission of Stress-Induced Pathologies

David M. Dietz, Quincey LaPlant, Emily L. Watts, Georgia E. Hodes, Scott J. Russo, Jian Feng, Ronald S. Oosting, Vincent Vialou, and Eric J. Nestler

Biol Psychiatry, 2011

Also: Mansuy, Roth, Bale and others

3

Ancestral environments affect biology of descendants



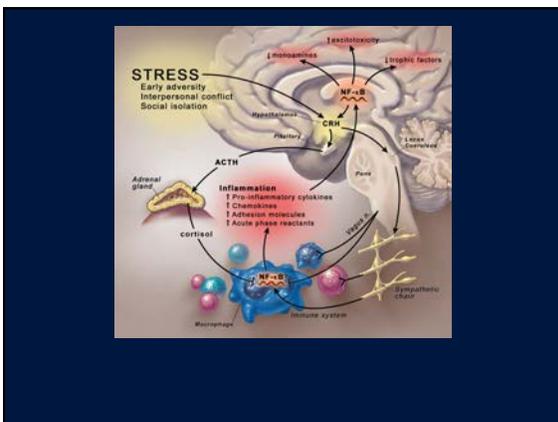
BRIEF REPORT

Transgenerational Effects of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Babies of Mothers Exposed to the World Trade Center Attacks during Pregnancy

Rachel Yehuda, Stephanie Mulherin Engel, Sarah R. Brand, Jonathan Seckl, Sue M. Marcus, and Gertrud S. Berkowitz

The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism, 98(7):4121-4125, 2009

4



Major Clinical Disorders Associated with Inflammation and Stress

- **Cardiovascular Disease**
 - Inflammatory markers (CRP/IL-6) are potent predictors of disease outcome; involvement of inflammation in plaque formation
- **Diabetes/Metabolic Syndrome/Obesity**
 - Inflammatory markers (CRP) predict disease development; high correlation between insulin resistance and IL-6 and other inflammatory markers
- **Cancer**
 - Activation of inflammatory signaling pathways (e.g. NF-kB) implicated as a fundamental mechanism of carcinogenesis and chemotherapy resistance

KEY TAKE HOMES ABOUT STRESS BIOLOGY

- EACH OF US IS UNIQUE- GENETICS, EPIGENETICS, GENE X ENVIRONMENT EXPERIENCES
- WE CAN CHANGE OUR BIOLOGICAL RESPONSES TO DIFFERENT TYPES OF PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS
- STRATEGIES NEED TO BE TAYLORED TO THE INDIVIDUAL BUT CERTAIN BASIC CONCEPTS APPLY

CHARACTERISTICS, KNOWLEDGE, AND SKILLS OF A SUCCESSFUL LEADER

Some of the initial sources of dissonance

Traditional Skills needed to Advancement in Academic Medicine

- Research acumen
- Grant writing skills
- Paper writing skills
- Ability to make research presentations
- Independent entrepreneur
- Gamesmanship

Skills needed to be a successful leader

- *Management skills*: **budgets**, hiring, evaluating personnel, firing, setting and achieving short-term goals
- *Leadership skills*: **communicating**, creating a vision, establishing values, creating/changing a culture, strategic planning and implementation, tactical planning and execution, managing above-below- and across an organization

Characteristics of successful leaders

- Honesty
- Humility
- Collaborative
- Compassionate
- Willing to take reasonable risks
- Willing to admit mistakes
- Willingness to grow and change
- Bravery
- Communicators
- Flexibility
- Resilient

“The other things needed”

- Intelligence- both intellectual and social
- “Fire in the belly”
- Intellectual and emotional maturity
- A willingness to put the success of others before your own and be able to celebrate their accomplishments
- A desire to teach and educate (in the larger sense)

WHY WE GET INTO TROUBLE AND WHAT SETS US UP FOR BURNOUT

Internal systems issues
External systems issues
Individual issues

A Department is a meta-stable state

- There are always *anticipated issues*:
 - Personnel (hiring, HR, faculty development, leaving)
 - Budget
 - Education/training
 - Research
 - Patient-related/clinical services
 - Community relations/philanthropy
 - Resource needs
- You can predict that *unpredictable crises and opportunities* will arise (just not when or what)

Internal systems issues

- We need to:
 - Delegate and hold people accountable (the *right team*)
 - Develop *systems* to manage: HR issues, recruitment, budgets, program and research planning/implementation, training concerns, continuous process improvement
 - *Communicate*, we never do a good enough job doing it
 - Protect *time to think strategically and tactically*

External systems issues

- Most leaders are “*middle men*” and must manage above and below and across
- *Alignment/misalignment* problems cause tremendous stress and burnout
- *Changes in systems*: ACA act, CMS requirements, healthcare system expectations, School of Medicine expectations, funding sources, NIH/ DOD, *perturb all!*
- What if our bosses cannot lead?
- Finances!

Individual issues

- “No (wo)man is an island” or “it takes a village to be a successful leader”
- Transference.....makes our world.....
- Most of the time it is not personal.....although it may feel like it is.....and occasionally it is personal
- Work relationships versus friendships...if you want unconditional positive regard...get a dog.
- “Rich people’s problems”

But what can we do about it?

When you feel overwhelmed or
under continual stress

STOP!

Is this the right job, the right
place, and the right time?

Are you doing what makes you happy
(at least for the majority of the
time)?

Overwhelmed: why?

- Perspective- there are times when we have a *platter-full of food on our dinner plate*, do you see a way out? If not, **get help**: peers, a coach, your boss, friends, your administrative team
- What is going on with the *rest of your life*
- *The telescope phenomena*: the need to tease apart tasks and timelines
- Turn off all of your gadgets, you may be *too connected* to get work done and you are using your gadgets to keep you from starting to dig out
- Are these *rich peoples problems*?
- What can you delegate?
- What can wait?

Less may be more

Working more hours is frequently *not* the
answer

Being scheduled to the point of fatigue and
distraction decreases problem-solving skills,
patience, communication skills and efficiency

Look, listen and learn

- What types of circumstances create the most stress for you?
- Ask others for advice and feedback
- Are there skills you need to learn?
- Are there better ways to address these situations in the future?
- Are there mechanisms (or people) that can help you with these tasks?

“To thy own self be true”

- Do you make time for your own well being:
 - Sleep and rest
 - Exercise
 - Some things in life to look forward to
 - Family & Friends
 - Controlling your own schedule
 - Trying something new
 - Taking “real” vacations

Resources

- AAMC
- Harvard leadership development programs
- Stress reduction programs: mindfulness programs, compassionate meditation programs
- Executive coaching

Work to live!... Do not live to work

- There are intrinsic biological differences in how we handle stress
- If one is under continual stress, stop and identify the sources:
 - is it the fit with the job?
 - Is the infrastructure missing?
 - Is there a misalignment?
 - Are there external factors?
 - Have I collapsed the telescope?
 - What can I change and how?
 - Am I out of balance? Why and what can I do to fix it?
- You can fix it !