

PERCEIVED STRESS AMONGST FRESHMEN IN HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY

Juliet Enow, Jae Eun Lee and Jung Hye Sung

School of Public Health, Jackson State University, Jackson, MS, USA

Abstract: Stress is defined as the body's non-specific response to any demand for change. College campuses present a lot of changes for young persons to adapt to, in a short while, thus the reason they serve as a major source of stress. There are a lot of factors perceived as stressors which influence the lives of young adults in colleges both positively and/or negatively. The purpose of this study was to identify the factors that first time students in an Historically Black College and University perceive as sources of stress and how they react to or cope with them. Thirty-nine freshmen students at Jackson State University were participated. The results indicated 56.4% of respondents reported being very stressed (stress levels of 1-5). The other 43.6% reported having minimal stress or no stress at all (levels of 6-10). The mean stress level reported was 5.28+/-2.554. The major source of stress (71%) was from school work mainly assignments, exams and time management in school. 19.4% of persons reported more than one source of stress, that is school work plus family, friends and tragedy. The different coping mechanisms included: Extracurricular activities like exercise and involvement in clubs and associations (42%). The other coping methods were; talking to someone, sleeping, eating, drinking, driving around and smoking. 32.3% of the participants used more than one coping method. These findings suggest the need for more research especially in areas of interventions which are effective in enhancing positive coping skills among college students.

Key words: Freshmen, stress, coping mechanisms.