

## THE ASSOCIATION OF STRESS SYMPTOMS WITH PROGRESSION OF CHRONIC DISEASES AMONG AFRICAN AMERICANS: MEDIATING ROLE OF PAIN

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**Abstract:** People often attempt to manage the daily living stress by participating in "comforting" act(s) that affect their overall health outcomes. However, impulsive coping behaviors such as over-eating, anxiety/worrying, smoking over an extended period may leave them vulnerable to chronic diseases. This study aims to determine mediating role of pain in the association of the stress symptoms with self-reported chronic disease among adults from African American Communities. A cross-sectional observation study was conducted to collect data. The study utilized non-probabilistic samples of 60 African Americans age 18 or older. Six items of chronic stress symptoms including amount of sleep, bowel problem, frequency of urination, shortness of breath, scale of worry, scale of sensitivity and irritation were measured by 5 point Likert type scale. A series of multiple regression analysis were used to determine if there is a significant correlation between stress symptoms, pain and self-reported chronic disease. The self-reported medical diagnosis had a strong association with pain with a ( $p=0.04$ ). This item could be potential clinical screening marker tool/identifying potential symptoms for chronic disease. Six of the variables had strong associations with pain ( $p < 0.05$ ). All six items could potentially lead to chronic disease that can be assessed and identified in the pain scale used in this study. Amount of sleep has a strong association with pain ( $p = .001$ ). As the level of sleep decreases the amount pain increases. The study suggested that stress symptoms may have direct and indirect effect on the chronic disease through pain.

**Keywords:** Stress, chronic disease, medical diagnosis, pain