

Title	Behavioral Medicine_ Work, Stress and Health
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Brief Introduction	<p style="text-align: center;">PREFACE</p> <p>This volume contains the entire proceedings of a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Advanced Study Institute held on August 2-15, 1981 in Castera-Verduzan, France. The ASI was entitled "Behavioral Medicine: Work, Stress, and Health." Its major theme was that health risk attributable to work stress is defined in terms of a balance between those factors which influence an individual's <u>susceptibility</u> and his/her <u>resistance</u> to illness. At the level of the individual employee, susceptibility factors include psychological (e.g., Type A behavior pattern) as well as social (e.g., blue vs. white collar workers) variables. At an organizational level, they may include company size, level of employment (e.g., middle-management), and type/extent of demands placed on workers. Resistance factors, currently viewed only at the individual level, include: social support, anger expression, and hardiness, the latter a personality trait found in highly stressed executives who remain healthy.</p> <p>Previous attempts to ameliorate work stress so as to reduce illness morbidity in employees have focused on teaching workers to relax under stress, alter stress-producing Type A characteristics, and ventilate pent-up anger resulting from day-to-day frustrations at work, all of which clearly alter physiological function and account for a high incidence of stress-related illness (e.g., coronary heart disease, hypertension) in industrialized societies. Such efforts have met with modest success and warrant further study/application. Efforts at organizational intervention, as opposed to those aimed at individual workers, are less evident.</p> <p>This type of "behavioral medicine" approach to understanding the complexities of work stress and its impact on health of employees goes beyond the single-discipline understanding of psychological, sociological, or medical facets of same and offers a <u>framework for integrating data</u> obtained from all bio-behavioral fields of study.</p>

It also highlights (a) the need for additional study of "resistance resources" both at the individual and systems level and (b) a shift toward a "balance sheet approach" to effective stress management. The latter is important, e.g., in allowing one to plan for increased social support or anger expression among employees, since early studies show that altering stress factors at the individual level can be difficult because of non-compliance/resistance problems.

New research findings, in addition to those summarized in this volume, presented at the ASI indicated that: (1) under-utilization at work (too few demands) can result in chronic boredom and affect worker health status much the same as over-load; (2) failure to cope with unpredictable stress (e.g., economic instability due to unemployment) results in increased incidence of depression among workers and their dependents; (3) national policies resulting in restriction of high-responsibility jobs to certain race/social class groups can influence disease (e.g., CHD) rates among these same groups; (4) employee "resource inadequacy" and "role ambiguity" are more influential in explaining employee health than are "role conflict" or "overload"; and, (5) cultural factors to some extent modify stress-strain relationships at work.

We are grateful to the 60 faculty and student participants who attended the ASI from 12 NATO and 5 non-NATO countries. It was their enthusiastic sharing of diverse professional expertise and life experience that ensured the educational success of the Institute.

We also wish to express our appreciation to Dr. Tilo Kester for his advice and assistance as regards preparation of the NATO-ASI grant application and selection of Institute site, to Dr. M. di Lullo and Mr. Robert Chabbal for their invaluable assistance in implementing the grant, to all members of the NATO Science Committee, and to Maryse Lagarde, secretary to the Association Scientifique Culturelle et Educative de Bonas, who was so helpful as regards day-to-day administrative matters throughout the two-week Institute.

We are also grateful to Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, for accepting the NATO award in our behalf.

We especially wish to thank our hosts, Professor Jean-Claude and Mme Simon, whose intellect, charm, and gracious French hospitality added immeasurably to our scientific proceedings. The Chateau de BONAS, set amid rolling green hills in a region of France famous for its Armagnac and its excellent cuisine, provided, we believe, the perfect ecological niche for an international, interdisciplinary conference; our memories of it shall not soon fade!

Finally, we wish to thank Mrs. Henny Hoogervorst, of Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, for her unfailing patience in seeing this volume through to completion. Without her help, this book would not have been published.

The Editors