

STRESS ESSAY PACK

For CAIE A2 Psychology Paper 3

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1 a) Describe what psychologists have discovered about:

- the physiology of stress, and
- causes of stress, including a study. [6]

Ans.

Stress involves both physiological responses and environmental causes. One physiological explanation is the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS), which describes how the body

[REDACTED]

Stress can be caused by life events. Holmes and Rahe argued that any major life change,

[REDACTED]

Work is another important cause of stress, especially when demands are high and control is low.

Researchers found that Swedish sawmill workers

[REDACTED]

Chandola et al. investigated links between work stress and CHD by following a large sample of civil servants for

[REDACTED]

1. b) Evaluate what psychologists have discovered about:

- the physiology of stress, and
- causes of stress, including a study

including a discussion about individual and situational explanations

Evaluation in your answer can include strengths, weaknesses and a discussion of issues and debates. [10]

Ans.

One relevant issue is individual and situational explanations. The GAS model explains stress as a physiological response within the individual,

In contrast, causes of stress such as life events and work consider situational factors. Holmes and Rahe showed that frequent life changes

Another relevant issue is reductionism versus holism. The GAS model is biologically reductionist as it focuses on physiological mechanisms such as cortisol release

Chandola et al. also measured

. Similarly, Holmes and Rahe's life events approach is more holistic

A final issue is determinism versus free-will. The GAS model and Type A personality

. However, Chandola et al.'s findings also consider free-will,

2 a) Describe what psychologists have discovered about:

- **biological measures:** – recording devices for heart rate and brain function (fMRI), including a study
- **sample tests for salivary cortisol, including a study.** [6]

Ans.

Biological measures investigate stress through physiological responses that are not reliant on self-report. These include recording devices for heart rate and brain function, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] l.

One biological measure of brain function is fMRI, which detects changes in blood oxygenation linked to neural activity. Wang et al. investigated the brain [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Another biological measure is salivary cortisol, a hormone released by the adrenal [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Evans and Wener investigated how crowding during commuting affects stress. In a naturalistic study of a [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

2. b) Evaluate what psychologists have discovered about:

- **biological measures:** – recording devices for heart rate and brain function (fMRI), including a study
- **sample tests for salivary cortisol, including a study**

including a discussion about subjective and objective data

Evaluation in your answer can include strengths, weaknesses and a discussion of issues and debates. [10]

Ans.

One relevant issue is the use of subjective and objective data. Biological measures such as heart rate, fMRI and salivary cortisol

Similarly, Evans and Wener measured cortisol levels to show that

Another relevant issue is psychometrics. Biological measures are often assumed to be highly reliable and valid because they use standardised equipment and procedures.

Similarly, fMRI data in Wang et al. depend on indirect measures of

A final issue is the use of questionnaires alongside biological measures. Questionnaires helped Evans and Wener to measure

. However, questionnaires are subjective and do not always align with biological indicators. For example, Evans and Wener found that

3 a) Describe what psychologists have discovered about:

- biofeedback as a psychological therapy, and
- stress inoculation training as a method of preventing stress. [6]

Ans.

Biofeedback is a psychological therapy based on operant conditioning, in which individuals learn to control physiological stress responses by receiving real-time feedback. Technology such as

[REDACTED]

This approach was demonstrated by Budzynski and Stoyva. They investigated whether accurate biofeedback could reduce muscle tension. Participants were

[REDACTED]

Stress inoculation training (SIT) is a preventative approach targeted to build resilience to future stress. It consists of three phases. The conceptualisation phase

[REDACTED]

3 b) Evaluate what psychologists have discovered about:

- **biofeedback as a psychological therapy, and**
- **stress inoculation training as a method of preventing stress**

including a discussion about application to everyday life

Evaluation in your answer can include strengths, weaknesses and a discussion of issues and debates. [10]

Ans.

One relevant issue is application to everyday life. Biofeedback has clear practical value because it teaches individuals to r

t. However, biofeedback often requires specialised devices and trained practitioners, reducing accessibility outside clinical settings. In contrast, SIT is

Another issue is individual and situational explanations. Biofeedback focuses on individual physiological responses, such as muscle tension or heart rate, and teaches individuals to regulate these internal processes. This assumes stress

A final issue is determinism versus free-will. Biofeedback appears deterministic because it depends on automatic physiological feedback loops, suggesting

4 a) Describe what psychologists have discovered about relaxation and imagery in reducing stress during medical treatment, using the study by Bridge et al. (1988). [6]

Ans.

Bridge et al. investigated whether relaxation and imagery could reduce stress and mood disturbance in women

A randomised control trial was conducted with 139 women of mean age 53, all under 70 years, attending a

Results showed no initial differences between groups. When women over 54 years were

It was concluded that relaxation combined with imagery

4 b) Evaluate what psychologists have discovered about relaxation and imagery in reducing stress during medical treatment, using the study by Bridge et al. (1988)

including a discussion about determinism versus free-will

Evaluation in your answer can include strengths, weaknesses and a discussion of issues and debates. [10]

Ans.

One relevant issue is determinism versus free-will. Bridge et al.'s findings suggest that stress reduction during radiotherapy can be influenced by p

[REDACTED]

Another issue is generalisations from findings. The study focused exclusively on women with early-stage breast cancer receiving radiotherapy at a single

[REDACTED]

A final issue is ethics. The study followed ethical guidelines carefully, as participants were fully informed,

[REDACTED]

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