

Sense of control, stress reactivity and recovery in women

Abstract

The effects of personal sense of control on stress reactivity and recovery while controlling for trait anxiety were assessed. Participants (N = 84) completed the Shapiro Control Inventory, Quality of Life Inventory, and State. ^V Trait Anxiety Index. Heart rate, blood pressure, and respiration rate were monitored during a fifteen--minute baseline period, followed by a six-minute cognitive stressor task and a fifteen minute recovery period. Women with a negative sense of control exhibited greater reactivity than women with a positive sense of control, though not statistically significant when trait anxiety was controlled for. Groups did not significantly differ in rate of recovery from stress or in quality of life reports; nor were the effects of stress reactivity on quality of life significant when trait anxiety was controlled for. The results reinforce the relationship between sense of control and trait anxiety and the need for statistical control when assessing these effects on stress.