

103 - INFLUENCE OF THE LIFE STYLE ON STRESS PERCEPTION OF ACTIVE AND SEDENTARY BANK CLERKS

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INTRODUCTION

The work, while human activity, has passed through significant changes in its conception, organization, and daily practical. The transformations are occurring quickly, imposing the worker to adapt to this new reality, producing more and with higher quality and efficiency. However, in this new reality, that we call "globalization", the human being has been placed in secondary position on the production process (Richard, 1997). Many researches has been denouncing the globalization problems, pointing the great pressure exerted in the workers of organizations, aiming the increase of production, the automation of tasks, changing technologies every day, decreasing the remuneration and increasing workload. Among other problems, this has been object of discussion and analysis in some congresses and academical meetings in the whole world (IEA, 1997).

Rosh apud Lipp (1996) and Nahas (2001) say that some occupations are clearly recognized as more stressful and susceptible stress elicitation problems, among them it is detached the bank clerks profession. The banking system is traditionally a focus of financial and social tension in Brazil, because it's in a close way related to the sudden economic plans, politics changes and institutional crises, always suffering more pressures to increase productivity, effectiveness and time reduction for accomplishment of tasks.

According to Bonamin (1994), as resulted of this pressure, processes of stress can occur, disclosing itself of diverse forms, as irritability, absenteeism and psychosomatic illnesses in different contexts as in work, leisure and family.

According to Lipp (2002), stress can be defined as a very complex reaction, composed by psychophysiological alterations that occur when the person is forced to face situations that exceed your ability of confrontation. The function of the outcome to stress is the person adaptation to the new situation, which is generated by the challenging stimulation. However, in case of this mechanism don't be enough for adaptation, the organism will be continually investing upon the stressful agent resulting in unnecessary dispend of energy (MARGIS et al., 2003).

The practice of physical activity regularly has been associated with stress reduction. Some studies suggest that exercise elicits the improvement the neural systems efficiency related with the capacity to deal with the stressful agents. A more healthful and active life style, associated with habits of physical activity and cares about health, seems to be related to a better quality of life, mental and physical well being, and the increase of productivity (HACKFORT, 1994; SAMULSKY; LUSTOSA, 1996; FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DE MÉDECINE SPORTIVE, 1998).

Despite the several articles published about the benefits of the physical exercise over mental health, many researchers are still questioning the veracity of this possible influence (SAMULSKY and LUSTOSA, 1996). This way, to add information regarding the subject, the present study verified the relation between life style and perceived stress of bank clerks.

METHOD

This is a field study, of descriptive nature, opinion and self-evaluation (RUDIO, 1986). The sample was probabilistic casual stratified, in accordance with Rudio (1986), composed by 45 females bank clerks of a state bank in Florianópolis/SC divided in two groups, sedentary (n=33) and active (n=12). The agencies where these bank clerks work had showed similar characteristics: great demand of tasks, services and customers, same salary reality, hierarchic and similar physical environment.

The instrument used for data's collection was the Perceived Stress Scale developed by Cohen et al. (1983) and adapted by Ururahy (1997). The habitual physical activities was investigated by a questionnaire developed by Pate and adapted by Nahas (2001). Those questions make part of the "Questionnaire of life style, self-evaluation of occurrence and stress control" developed by Andrade (2001). The questionnaire is composed of 47 questions, objectives and mixing, directed to inquiry the perception of life's style and stress' occurrences from bank clerks.

The statistical treatment of the data was made through descriptive statistics, (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation) and inferential (t test).

RESULTS

The mean age was 34,5 years (+48-15/s = 9,85), being that the mean age of active group was 32,3 years (+48-18/s=9,88) and the of sedentary group was 35,3 years (+48-15/s = 9,88). The scholar level is high school and college degree. All active bank clerks have a superior course (college) while only 74,2% of the sedentary ones has it.

The index of perceived stress (IPS) of bank clerks was considered medium, (25,3/ +42,-8/ s=7,25). The mean of the IPS showed by the active group (24,25 /+37-11/s=8,11) was lower than the IPS showed by the sedentary group (25,64; +42-8/s=7.02), but without a significant difference.

The level of self-evaluated stress of active and sedentary bank clerks was between medium and high. Medium stress was pointed by 42,4% of sedentary and by 25% of active. High stress was pointed by 24,2% and 50%, and lower stress for 21,2% of sedentary and of active 25%, respectively. Extreme stress was indicated by 9,1% of the sedentary ones, being that no active bank clerk indicated it.

The anxiety level was also concentrated between medium and high level (specially for actives), and had showed the higher average among the variables related to stress. Part of the active (50%) self-evaluates as very anxious, while the sedentary ones are distribute between medium (39,4%) and high anxiety (39,4%). Extreme anxiety was cited by 25% of the active and by 9,1% of the sedentary.

A light trend for a superior tension level was presented by sedentary. Those presented medium tension (39,4%), high tension (33,3%), little in 18,2%, and extreme tension in 9,1% of cases. Between the active there was no such indications of extreme tension, where the majority has presented a medium level of tension.

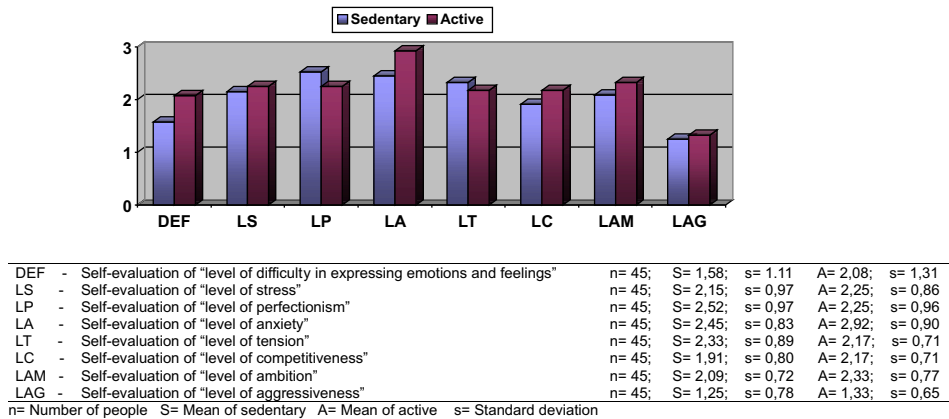
Active bank clerks shown to be more competitive than sedentary ones, where 50% indicate medium, 33,3% high, and 16,7% little competitiveness. The majority of sedentary presented little and medium competitiveness (36,4% for each), and the rest of them indicated a high level of competitiveness (27,3%).

The majority of active and sedentary presented little aggressiveness, being the majority of both of them pointed themselves as less aggressive. In the other hand, perfectionism level was high; being 39,4% of sedentary and 33,3% of active had presented high perfectionism.

The bank clerks had presented medium or high ambition. The active had presented lower level of ambition than the sedentary. The active had presented bigger difficulty in expressing emotions and feelings. 16,7% of them indicated extreme difficulty, while any sedentary indicated this level of difficulty.

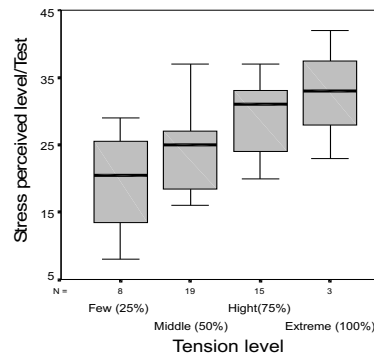
Among the variables associated to stress, the anxiety demonstrated to be higher, while the one that presented to be more reduced was the aggressiveness. The graph 1 demonstrates the means for each one of these variables.

Graph 1: Mean of self-evaluation from the variables related to stress. 0 = any; 1 = little; 2 = medium; 3 = very; 4 = extreme.



Relating perceived stress to tension level, can be observed that as high is the tension level, higher will be stress level and vice versa. The participants who had smaller IPS (19,5;s=7,61) presented little tense, as well as bank clerk who had higher IPS (32,67;s=9,5) indicated extremely tense. These data are presented in graph 2.

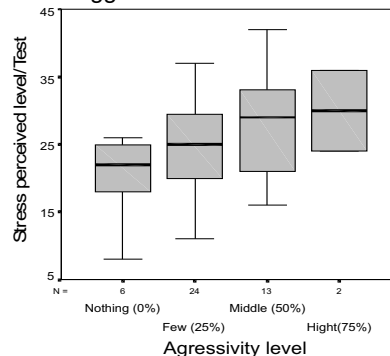
Graph 2: relation between perceived stress and tension's level



The crossing of perceived stress faced with competitiveness demonstrated a negative relation, because who had self-evaluated with low level of competitiveness shows greater perceived stress.

When evaluating the level of stress faced with aggressiveness we found a positive relation. The most aggressive had gotten a greater mean of stress (IPS=30;s=8,48), while the ones who indicated not aggressive had an IPS of 20,17(s=6,85). These data are presented in graph 3.

Graph 3: perceived stress related with aggressiveness



The competitiveness' level followed the ambition's level. The bank clerks who had self-evaluated, as being little competitive also had been the ones who had gotten the smaller mean of ambition's level.

DISCUSSION

The presupposed of literature, (SHEPHARD, 1994; FÉDERATION INTERNATIONALE OF MEDICINE SPORTIVE, 1998; ANDRADE, 2001) about the profile of active and sedentary people, indicate that the most of productive population is sedentary. This estimative is confirmed by the data of this study, because the bigger part of bank clerks was set in sedentary life style.

Andrade (2001) in your doctor thesis carried through with 50 males bank clerks observed significant difference between levels of perceived stress in sedentary and active group. The results of his research indicated that the practice of physical activity decreased the level of perceived stress of the workers. However, the female bank clerks of this study had not presented significant differences in relation to the life style.

The similar level of stress for active and sedentary women suggests that the physical activity, or the lack of it, doesn't have to be observed as a guarantee factor in the combat of stress, suggesting that the variety of variable that influence on stress, specially on a pressure situation that the bank clerks live, can be influencing on their IPS, diminishing the benefits of an active life style.

In the present study, the reasons for physical activity practice were not verified. One of the reasons that active had not felt the psychological benefits of the practice can be the lack of chances of the exercise modality choice, having to make an activity that they do not like. Daley and Maynard (2003) had compared the differences in the psychological benefits of the exercise in different modalities. The results had indicated that the psychological benefits were bigger when the individuals

made the modalities that they had preference.

Both of the groups had presented mean of IPS a little below of the medium stress, which is considered a ideal level of stress, therefore according to Lipp (2003), must exist a balance between *stress* (the good stress) and *distress* (bad stress).

The bank clerks demonstrated high levels of anxiety and perfectionism (the highest of the variable associates to stress). This anxiety can be elicited by the increase of pressure that bank clerks are suffering in their job, because the needs to time reduction for accomplishment of tasks (ANDRADE, 2002). The anxiety has adaptive function, as well as stress, because it mobilizes the individual resources for more adequate confrontation, in face to the daily demands (CHAVES and CADE, 2004). In this direction, it is expected in the interactions human and functions as an alert, need effort, attention, promptitude and best investment on situations that, in certain way, threaten the individual.

Bahrke and Morgan (1978) apud Weinberg (2001) investigating anxiety level alterations through application of physical exercise, meditation and rest, observed that occurred reduction of anxiety through physical exercise, meditation and rest, concluding that the three forms of treatment works positively over anxiety. In this way, it would be expected that active bank clerks had lower level of anxiety, however was verified that the average from the level of anxiety in active group was higher than sedentary group.

The aggressiveness demonstrated to have positive relation with the level of stress in bank clerks. França and Rodrigues apud Fiamoncini (2003) indicate that two of the pointers of stress that they evidence the psychosomatic dynamics are the aggressiveness and irritability. Following the design of this study, as the levels of stress had been considered normal, the aggressiveness was considered low.

The tension was the other variable that demonstrated great positive relation with level of stress was, because the tensest had been the one that had self-evaluated like more stressed. According to Magalhães Neto (2002), stress is determined by the adaptation capacity of the individual front a new challenge, or else, that can leave the organism in tension and inquietude, not only in level of their physical, but mainly the psychic forces.

The competitiveness' level was high for those who had self-evaluated as very or extremely ambitious. Based on this data, it is suggested that the more ambitious people is more competitive, because the pressure exercised by the banking system in a situation where few people obtain good chances.

CONCLUSION

There are no significant differences of perception in stress level between active and sedentary bank clerks, even in results of perceived stress or in self-evaluated stress. Therefore, must be considered that the genetic and personal history and the home and work environment are also an important variable in the study of stress of active and sedentary populations.

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INFLUENCE OF LIFE STYLE IN STRESS' PERCEPTION OF ACTIVE AND SEDENTARY BANK CLERKS**Abstract**

In the current society many professions suffer influence from labor stress because of the great pressures to increase productivity, effectiveness and time reduction in accomplishment of tasks. Bank clerks have been one of the professional categories more affected by stress, together with police officer and primary school teacher. Studies indicate that stress perception can be influenced by life style, been the actives less committed by stress. This research aimed to verify how workers of a state bank in Florianópolis/SC, identified as sedentary and active life stile, perceive their stress. The sample was composed by 45 females bank clerks, 12 active and 33 sedentary. The instrument used for data's collection was the Perceived Stress Scale developed by Cohen et al. (1983) and adapted by Ururahy (1997). The habitual physical activities was investigated by a questionnaire developed by Pate and adaptaded by Nahas (2001). The data had been treated by descriptive statistics and inference (t test). Among the variables related to stress, anxiety was the higher level (2,58 s=0,86), where sedentary women demonstrated a higher anxiety level related to active (p<0,05). However, active had demonstrated greater competitiveness and difficulty in expressing their feelings. The variable more positively associated to stress was tension and aggressiveness. The sedentary bank clerks had presented perceived stress index (IPS) of 25,64 (s=7.02/-8, +42), while the active had lower IPS (24,25; s=8,11/-11, +37), without significant difference (p>0,05). This way, it was concluded that life style can not determine the perceived stress in bank clerks, suggesting that the other variables that influence stress, specially in the pressure situation lived by the bank clerks can be influenced on their ISP, decreasing the benefits of an active life style.

Key-Words: Perceived Stress, Life's Style, Bank Clerks.

STRESS SIGNIFICATION E STYLE DE VIE OU Á PROPOS DE LA BANQUE ACTIVE E SEDENTAIRE**Résumé**

Dans la société contemporain beaucoup de professions souffrent l'influence du stress au travail en fonction des pressions chaque fois plus grandes pour élever la productivité et l'efficacité, autant que pour réduire le temps engagé dans l'accomplissement des tâches. Parmi les catégories professionnelles plus affectées pour le stress, ainsi que des policiers et des professeurs primaires, rencontre la catégorie des employés de banque. Les études indiquent que la perception du stress peut être influencée par le style de vie, dont les personnes actives sont les moins attaqué pour cet malheur. Savant de ceci, cette recherche a eu pour but d'examiner comment les femmes employées d'une banque d'Etat en Florianópolis/SC, identifiées comme sédentaire et actif, perçoivent son stress. L'échantillon s'est composé pour 45 femmes employées de banque, étant 12 actifs et 33 sédentaires. On a utilisé à l'aide d'instruments d'Escale du Stress Perçu d' Cohen et autres (1983) adapté par Ururahy (1997). Pour vérifier l'indice d'activité fisica habituelle, un questionnaire d'activités físicas habituelles d'Pâté adapté d'Nahas (2001), a utilisé. Les résultats ont été traitées par statistique descriptive et inferencial (Essai t). Parmi les variables associées au stress, l'anxiété était cela qui a montré être la plus élevée (2.58 s=0,86), de façon que les employées de banque sédentaires avaient démontré le plus grand niveau en relation à les actifs (p<0,05). D'autre part, les actifs avaient démontré une plus grande compétitivité et difficulté en exprimant ses sentiments. Les variables qui ont eu plus associé positivement au stress avaient été la tension et l'agressivité. Les sédentaires avaient presente l'indice du stress perçu (ISP) de 25.64 (s=7.02/ -8, +42), pendant que les actifs avaient obtenu ISP moindre, 24.25 (s=8,11/ -11, +37), sans présenter une différence significative (p0,05). Donc, on peut conclure que le style de vie n'est pas déterminatif en la perception du stress des employées de banque, suggérant que l'influence d'une gamme des variables sur le stress, surtout la pression sur lequel les employées de banque travaillent, peut être en influençant leur ISP et, ainsi, en redant les bénéfices d'un style de vie actif.

Paroles-clés: Stress Perçu, Style de Vie, Employées de Banque.

LA INFLUENCIA DEL ESTILO DE VIDA EM LA PERCEPCIÓN DEL ESTRÉS DE BANCARIAS ACTIVAS Y SEDENTARIAS**Resúme**

En la actual sociedad muchas profesiones sufren influencia del estrés laboral en función de las presiones cada vez mayores para aumentar la productividad, eficacia, y para la disminución del tiempo en la realización de las tareas. Entre las profesiones mas afectadas por el estrés, juntamente con policías y profesores primarios, encuentra-se los bancarios. Estudios indican que la percepción del stress puede ser influenciado por el estilo de vida, siendo que las personas activas son menos acometidas por ese mal. Esa investigación tiene por objetivo verificar como trabajadoras de un banco estatal en Florianópolis/SC, identificadas como sedentarias e activas, perciben su estrés. La muestra ha sido compuesta por 45 bancarias, siendo 12 activas y 33 sedentarias. Fueran utilizados como instrumentos la Escala de Stress Percibido de Cohen et al. (1983) adaptada por Ururary (1997). Lo nivele habitual de actividad física ha sido mensurado por el cuestionario de actividades físicas habituales de Pate adaptado por Nahas (2001). Los datos fueran tratados con estadística descriptiva e inferencial (teste t). De las variables relacionadas al estrés, la ansiedad fue a la que nuestro estar mas elevada (2,58 s=0,86), siendo que las bancarias sedentarias han demostrado mayor nivel en relación las activas (P<0,05). Por otro lado, las activas han demostrado mayor competitividad y dificultad en expresar sus sentimientos. Las variables que mas asociaran se positivamente al estrés fueron la tensión y la agresividad. Las sedentarias presentan índice de estrés percibido (ISP) de 25,64 (s=7.02/-8,+42), enguanto a las activas han tenido un ISP menor, 24,25 (s=8,11/-11,+37), sin presentar diferencia significativa (p>0,05). Así, se ha concluido que el estilo de vida no es determinante en la percepción del estrés en las bancarias, sugerido que la gama de variables que se ha influenciado en el estrés, en especial en la situación de presión que encontrase las bancarias, pueda estar influenciado en lo su ISP, disminuyendo los beneficios de un estilo de vida activo.

Palabras clave: Estrés Percibido, Estilo de vida, Bancarias.

INFLUÊNCIA DO ESTILO DE VIDA NA PERCEPÇÃO DO ESTRESSE DE BANCÁRIAS ATIVAS E SEDENTÁRIAS**Resumo**

Na sociedade atual muitas profissões sofrem influência do estresse laboral em função das pressões cada vez maiores para aumentar a produtividade, eficácia, e para a diminuição do tempo na realização das tarefas. Dentre as profissões mais afetadas pelo estresse, juntamente com policiais e professores primários, encontram-se os bancários. Estudos indicam que a percepção do estresse possa ser influenciada pelo estilo de vida, sendo as pessoas ativas menos acometidas por esse mal. Sabendo disso, essa pesquisa teve por objetivo verificar como trabalhadoras de um banco estatal em Florianópolis/SC, identificadas como sedentárias e ativas, percebem seu estresse. A amostra foi composta por 45 bancárias, sendo 12 ativas e 33 sedentárias. Foram utilizados como instrumentos a Escala de Estresse Percibido de Cohen et al. (1983) adaptada por Ururahy (1997). Para a verificação do nível de atividade física habitual utilizou-se o questionário de atividades físicas habituais de Pate adaptado por Nahas (2001). Os dados foram tratados com estatística descritiva e inferencial (Teste t). Das variáveis relacionadas ao estresse, a ansiedade foi a que mostrou estar mais elevada (2,58 s=0,86), sendo que as bancárias sedentárias demonstraram maior nível em relação às ativas (p<0,05). Por outro lado, as ativas demonstraram maior competitividade e dificuldade em expressar seus sentimentos. As variáveis que mais se associaram positivamente ao estresse foram a tensão e a agressividade. As sedentárias apresentaram índice de estresse percebido (ISP) de 25,64 (s=7.02/ -8, +42), enquanto as ativas obtiveram ISP menor, 24,25 (s=8,11/ -11, +37), sem apresentar diferença significativa (p<0,05). Desta forma, conclui-se que o estilo de vida não é determinante na percepção do estresse das bancárias, sugerindo que a gama de variáveis que influenciam no estresse, em especial na situação de pressão que se encontram as bancárias, possa estar influenciando no seu ISP, diminuindo os benefícios de um estilo de vida ativo. **Palavras-chave:** Estresse Percibido, Estilo de Vida, Bancárias.