# Chapter 42 Fatigue and Stress☆

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# Abstract

High levels of fatigue that interfere with daily life activities are common in the general population with prevalence estimates ranging from 5% to 20%. Fatigue is a multidimensional construct with mental and physical aspects. Fatigue-related disorders (e.g., chronic fatigue syndrome) are often associated with elevated levels of psychological distress. Evidence suggests a bidirectional association between fatigue and stress. Fatigue and related constructs such as exhaustion can result from prolonged stressful demands. Biological correlates of fatigue include dysregulation of the autonomic, neurohormonal, and/or immune systems, but no specific biomarkers of fatigue exist. Stress-related psychological disorders (e.g., posttraumatic stress disorder and depression) have fatigue as a core characteristic. Fatigue is also a common symptom in various medical diseases including cardiovascular disease and cancer. The relationship between stress and fatigue may be important in the development of multidisciplinary interventions targeted at improving health-related outcomes.