# Chapter 38 Aging and Psychological Stress

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# Abstract

The conceptual link between aging and psychological stress is the construct “allostatic load”—that is, the notion that a repeated and cumulative disturbance of homeostasis may lead to certain syndromes that are triggered by a dysregulation of the chronic stress-response. We summarize the markers of this hypothetical process at primary, secondary, and tertiary stages, with particular attention on brain mechanisms that are in this pathway or are even instrumental to such dysregulation and its pathological consequences. As cumulative stress and allostasis are highly correlated with chronological age, we present an example for the statistical isolation of such mechanisms from the generic effect of age.