

Five Types of Stress

Hiroo Matsuoka

Chairman of Miyagi Prefecture Mental Health Welfare Association,

Public Interest Incorporated Association

(Department of Preventive Psychiatry, Tohoku University Graduate School of Medicine)

Consultation support from the Miyagi Disaster Mental Health Care Center is the most important project among all support projects in the disaster area. Psychiatric intervention focusing on the mental health of patients is a basic element of clinical psychiatry. The importance of the interaction between an individual's genetic predisposition and their environment has recently been emphasized in psychiatric disorders because patient conditions follow a unique clinical course, and are affected not only by genetics but also by strong environmental factors. This provides an opportunity to improve individuals' "resilience" in overcoming diseases, leading to the prevention of psychiatric disorders. The above findings led to the development of research into the effects of daily activities on the mental conditions of individuals. In other words, the new concept of "(personalized) precision medicine" has become popular in psychiatry as well. The research has revealed several types of stress with different effects.

The "experience sampling method" has been used in Western countries for 20 years. The method even facilitates immediate intervention based on the assessment of daily activities using an electronic device that has rapidly become popular due to recent IT development. Studies of early psychiatric disorders using this method have examined stress levels related to the following five factors and their relationship to the mechanisms of psychiatric disorders: (1) recent events; (2) current activities; (3) co-habitants; (4) current isolation; and (5) residential area. This method enables not only the assessment of recent stressful events but also an objective assessment of sensitivity to stress (tolerance) based on past stressful events. For example, studies have shown that experiences of adversity, such as past abuse, have a great impact on an individual's sensitivity to stress. Various types of stress facilitate the development of psychiatric disorders. Therefore, a detailed assessment of stressful events in daily life, as with the above studies, may lead to the development of "personalized precision mental health care." Consultation support in the disaster area may be just a prototype for precision medicine.

1) Reininghaus et al.: Stress sensitivity, aberrant salience, and threat anticipation in early psychosis: An experience sampling study. Schizophr Bull Feb1, 2016.