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KICK-OFF
Summit



EMERGING HEALTH AND SECURITY CONCERNS FOR EXECUTIVES

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"Man doesn't just die,
He kills himself"
-Anonymous

Man is caught up in the quest to better his lot and possibly that of others around him. Added to this is the desire to outsmart or outdo our real and imagined competitions. While competition and the pursuit of excellence may be healthy to great extent, it may also expose us to some ill effects some of which may border on our health and healthy living as well as posing some security challenges.

Arising from today's fast pace world of business, the struggle to belong and maintain accolades of our new found status there is pressure on time which constitute a drain on our physical social and intellectual energy.



Some unhealthy adjustments have risen to the horizon and today's executives have entered into a global village with common lifestyle and common diseases emerging irrespective of our geographic location.

Diseases of the West (Europe and America) have now spread globally with residents in African and Asia being the worst victims.

Diseases of affluence (lifestyle diseases) are now common place in our environment.

Lifestyle diseases share risk factors similar to prolonged exposure to three modifiable life style behavior smoking, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity and result in development of chronic diseases specifically heart diseases, stroke, diabetes, obesity, metabolic syndrome, chronic obstructive airway diseases and some types of cancers.

These illnesses used to be considered the diseases of industrialized countries, so called Western disease or diseases of affluence; however internationally they are known as non-communicable and chronic diseases, part of the degenerative disease group. They can result in loss of independence, years of disability or death and impose a considerable economic burden on health services.

The combination of four health lifestyle factors:

1. Maintaining a healthy weight
2. Exercising regularly
3. Following a healthy diet and
4. Not smoking -

Seem to be associated with as much as 80% reduction in the risk of developing the most common and deadly chronic diseases.

We live in a changing world. The interplay of political, social, economic and technological demands combine to place demands on today's executives. On one extreme is the ill effect of lifestyle diseases and on the other side is the emerging and persisting “stress” that is the nagging lot of high executives. We shall attempt to summarize this discussion by highlighting the importance of this lifelong ailment of professionals.

STRESS

In one US study as many as 40% of workers described their jobs as stressful. This gives some indications as to how prevalent work related



stress is. Apart from teachers, managers and professionals are the next highest affected occupation suffering from work related stress, depression and anxiety. Stress is caused by various factors all of which are work related. Executives are particularly stressed by the multiplicity of relationships and connections/collaboration both business and social, a part of which they must be in order to maintain the assume or sometimes falsely arrogated status.

Stress or may be external (heat, cold, working conditions, stressful psychological environment), or internal (physical ailment worries) and other psychological Problems. They may be acute (short term) or chronic (long terms) or combined although executive stressors are more often long term.

EFFECT OF STRESS

Stress is proven beyond doubt to make people ill, and evidence is increasing as to the number of ailments and diseases caused by stress. Stress is known to contribute to heart disease, hypertension and impaired immune system.

Stress is also linked to strokes, irritable bowel syndromes, ulcer, diabetes, myalgia, arthralgia, miscarriages of pregnancy, allergies, alopecia and even premature tooth loss.

Various studies in the USA have demonstrated that removing stress improves specific aspects of health. Stress management was shown to be capable of reducing heart attack by 75% in people with heart disease. Stress management techniques along with methods of coping with anger contribute to reduction of high blood pressure and increases the effectiveness of prescribed drugs.

Stress significantly reduces brain function such as memory, concentration and learning all of which are central to effective performance at work.

Some of the causes of stress include, long working hours, excessive time away from home and family, office politics and conflict among staff, responsibilities and pressures disrupting life-balance (diet, exercise, sleep and rest, play, family time etc).

At clinical level, stress in individuals can be assessed by team measurement of cortisol and Dihydroepiandrosterone (DHEA). However,



many managers do not visit health clinics and we may have to rely on other signs such as:

1. Sleep difficulties
2. Loss of appetite
3. Poor concentration or poor memory retention
4. Performance dip
5. Uncharacteristic errors or missed deadlines
6. Anger or tantrums
7. Violent or anti-social behavior
8. Emotional outburst
9. Alcohol or drug abuse
10. Nervous habits

Ten key stress indicators simple enough for initial self assessment.

If you find yourself failing this test then “**STOP TO THINK**” life is short enough as it is: **COMMIT TO CHANGE BEFORE ONE DAY CHANGE IS FORCED UPON YOU.**

STRESS RELIEF POINTERS

Stress relief methods are many and varied. Most solutions involve combination of remedies mainly directed at reducing stress susceptibility and removing stressors.

1. Think seriously and talk with others to identify causes of stress and take steps to remove them or remove yourself from them.
2. Understand the type of stressors affecting you
3. Improve diet Vit B complex, Magnesium, balanced healthy diet is essential
4. Reduce toxins alcohol, smoking
5. Take more exercise
6. Do not insist on controlling things that are uncontrollable
7. Share worries off load, loneliness is a big ally of stress
8. Explore and use relaxation methods, yoga, massage a breath of fresh air.
9. Seek modern computer aids (embrace ICT)
10. Consult your doctor for medical problems.

DIET

Processed foods are not as good as natural foods. Study the package of food products for content before consumption.



Fresh fruits and vegetables and fish are generally good.

Canned food should be avoided. Many are excessively salted and may contain lot of sugar which is quite harmful. Avoid pills and tablets bought over the counter, stick to only prescribed drugs and for only the specified dosage and duration. If in doubt consult your doctor.

We need to take personal responsibility for improving our health because inaction is having negative effect on colleagues and co-workers and the final effect is that customer relationship will suffer too.

EXTENSION

An Indian study showed high prevalence of metabolic and dietetic coronary risk factors among adolescents of middle and upper class of India (J. Muttapillmyalil). Some of the metabolic diseases in later life are traceable to abnormal adjustment in childhood and adolescence. Our unhealthy lifestyle may find ill expression in our children.

SECURITY

The steady socio-economic degeneration in Nigeria has transformed the country into a struggling ground for survival. Much has been said about the poor's predicament which revolves around poverty. However the reality is that even the lifestyles of the rich are far from happiness. Incidentally, most of the rich have been either active players in the successive government's leadership failures in various levels of government. Therefore, while the poor wallows in anguish due to chronic poverty, the rich are compelled to adopt and come to terms with largely unhappy lifestyles. Hardly does any Nigerian wealthy executive enjoy comfortable night sleep due to worsening security concern all over the land. The array of surrounding state security and personal security personnel hardly guarantees such comfort.

At typical executive barricades himself and his immediate family in a fortress like structure, designed to keep off armed robbers. Some of these supposedly secure houses are built with complete neglect of safety and comfort standards. A number of household members have been reported trapped in their strongholds in times of emergencies and locked away from the help and support of neighbours.

With growing societal poverty executives and their family members have



by extension become easy targets of miscreants. With the emergence of kidnapping the fears of the rich have increased. Kidnappers do not necessarily have to target the rich themselves but their family members and relatives. The emerging and worsening culture of fear is a major contributor to executive stress syndrome.

Security has to do with “Freedom from danger or with threat to a nation's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interests and enhance well-being of its peoples”.

Although the government has increased spending on the police in recent years, the police is still poorly paid, inefficient and highly corrupt. Armed robbery is a problem especially on major roads by armed groups (some of which even wear official police or army uniforms). Mobile phone theft and car snatching are on the rise.

We are therefore faced with a situation where we are threatened on every side. We should invest more on developmental ventures and less in frivolities which only serve to attract unwanted customers both within and without.

With the growth of ICT worldwide is the equal but opposite growth in criminal imaginations and activities of Nigerians. The growth and dimension of various internet and ICT scams has made Nigeria the unenviable headquarters of such fraud worldwide. Foreigners were the initial victims but Nigerians are increasingly becoming the targets especially the upper class and professionals. ATM fraud, phishing e-mails and phony web pages (identity and password thefts) travel scams, to mention a few are some of the techniques.

Some of the perpetrators of these crimes are so witty and they may actually be a network of professionals able to access classified information and clone documents to convince and defraud their unsuspecting victims. The overall effect of this is a drain in the national economy and a disincentive to would be foreign investors.

The underlying factor and fulcrum of these fraudulent activities is individual or corporate greed. It takes two to tangle.