

# Examination Stress: Impact on Mental Health and Homoeopathic Management

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20260326>

## ABSTRACT

Examination stress is a common and significant concern among students, affecting their mental, emotional, physical, and academic well-being. While a certain level of stress can act as a motivating factor, excessive or prolonged examination stress can negatively impact mental health, leading to anxiety, sleep disturbances, reduced concentration, and poor academic performance. In today's highly competitive education system, students face increasing pressure from academic expectations, fear of failure, peer comparison, and poor time management. This article explores the concept of examination stress, its causes, signs, and multifaceted impact on mental health. It also highlights effective coping strategies, including lifestyle modifications, stress management techniques, and social support. Furthermore, the article discusses the homoeopathic perspective on stress-related psychological disorders, based on classical homoeopathic principles. Homoeopathy emphasizes individualized treatment by addressing the mental and emotional state of the student alongside physical symptoms. Commonly indicated homoeopathic remedies for examination stress are outlined, demonstrating how a well-selected constitutional remedy may

help restore emotional balance and improve overall well-being. The article concludes that homoeopathy, when combined with healthy coping strategies, can play a supportive role in managing examination stress and promoting better mental health among students.

**Keywords:** Examination stress, Mental health, Academic pressure, Anxiety, Stress management, Homoeopathy, Constitutional treatment.

## INTRODUCTION

Everybody has experienced exam stress at some point in their lives. Students always perceive exam periods as stressful. Exam anxiety is typically brought on by unfamiliar questions, performance pressure, fear of failing, and time constraints. Nonetheless, stress is a normal human occurrence, and everyone has experienced exam stress at some point in their lives. Exams and academic performance naturally involve some stress, which can occasionally inspire and improve performance.

However, excessive stress leads to health problems and poor exam performance. Understanding the signs of severe stress, such as headaches, dizziness, insomnia, and lack of sleep, is crucial. Proactive study planning, mindfulness exercises in the

classroom, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and seeking assistance when needed are all ways to prevent stress and its associated health risks. [1]

### **What is Stress:**

In general, stress is not regarded as a mental health issue. Stress can result in mental issues, even though it is somewhat connected to our mental health. Additionally, it may exacerbate the existing issue. For instance, mental health issues like anxiety and depression can result from experiencing high levels of stress. Significant agitation, frustration, tantrum outbursts, and overwhelming feelings that you are out of control or require control are psychiatric symptoms of stress; Lack of energy, headaches, upset stomach, diarrhoea, constipation, nausea, pain, and muscle soreness are some of the physical signs of stress. stiffness, a fast heartbeat, sleeplessness, recurrent colds, and infections. [2]

Tremors and anxiety, ringing in the ears, sweaty, cold hands and feet, dry mouth, clenched jaws and teeth, and trouble swallowing. Persistent worry, racing thoughts, inefficiency and forgetfulness, trouble focusing, poor judgment, negative behaviour, or negative vision are all signs of psychological stress. will Stress-related behavioural symptoms include changes in appetite, such as not eating or overeating, putting off or avoiding daily tasks, possibly beginning to use alcohol, drugs, or tobacco, biting one's nails, and fidgeting. [2]

### **Examination Stress:**

The psychological and emotional strain people feel before or during exams is referred to as examination stress. It is a normal reaction to the expectations and demands of academic evaluations. Anxiety, nervousness, fear of failing, difficulty focusing, sleep disturbances, irritability, and physical symptoms like headaches or stomach-aches are some of the ways that exam stress can show up. Students of all ages, from elementary school to college, frequently

experience this. Excessive or protracted stress can have detrimental effects on wellbeing and academic performance, even though a certain amount of stress can inspire and improve performance. To preserve a healthy balance and maximize one's capacity to perform well on tests, it is critical to identify and effectively manage exam stress. [3]

### **Reasons for Exam Stress:**

Examination can be stressful for a variety of reasons, but managing some stress is a great way to overcome exam anxiety.

Knowing the causes of stress makes it easier to determine them and get ready to develop practical coping mechanisms for exam stress. The triggers of exam stress are listed below.

#### **1. Inadequate Exam Preparation:**

A major contributing factor to exam stress is inadequate exam preparation.

Exam anxiety is mostly caused by students who have bad study habits, are unable to finish the curriculum, or may not be prepared for exams.

Students find it difficult to handle exams during the exam schedule and discover that their preparation is inadequate, which causes stress and anxiety. [1]

#### **2. Fear of Failure:**

For most students, fear of failing is one of the main causes of exam stress.

Students are sometimes under intense pressure to perform exceptionally well due to the expectations of their parents, teachers, and sometimes even themselves. Students become anxious to perform exceptionally well as a result of their fear of performing exceptionally well. [1]

#### **3. Academic Expectations:**

High academic expectations or the drive for top performance create test stress for students. Students feel overwhelmed by the pressure to earn better marks and gain admission to top schools, along with the appearance of national tests. The demands from parents and teachers contribute to a heightened fear of exams. [1]

#### 4. Peer Pressure:

Peer pressure is a major reason children perform poorly on exams. Expectations from peers can greatly affect students, especially in competitive academic settings. Stress can come from the need to do better and to outshine others. [1]

#### 5. Lack of Time Management:

Time management skills are crucial for balancing exam preparation. A major reason for stress during exams is the inability to manage time well. Juggling multiple questions and prioritizing the important ones makes it hard for students to use their time effectively. This leads to exam stress and anxiety. [1]

#### 6. Comparing with Others:

Comparing oneself to others is a key factor that causes exam stress. Social comparisons regarding grades and performance, along with feelings of jealousy, contribute significantly to stress during exams. Trying to do better than others, coupled with peer pressure about exam results, causes students to lose focus on their own educational journey. [1]

### Impact of Exam Stress:

Exam pressure affects in several ways, including mental, physical, emotional, and social aspects as follows. [4]

#### 1. Mental and Emotional Effects

- Anxiety and panic attacks
- Lack of focus and memory issues
- Irritability and mood swings
- Low self-esteem or feelings of hopelessness

#### 2. Physical Effects

- Sleep disturbances or insomnia
- Headaches, stomach pains, or fatigue
- Loss of appetite or overeating
- Weakened immune system

#### 3. Academic Effects

- Poor performance despite preparation
- Blank-outs during exams
- Incomplete or rushed answers
- Decreased problem-solving skills

#### 4. Social Effects

- Withdrawal from friends and activities

- Decreased participation in class
- Conflicts with family due to mood changes

### How to Recognize Signs of Exam Stress?

Here are a few signs that anyone may be under high levels of stress:

- Constant worrying about results
- Crying spells or angry outbursts
- Complaining of physical problems without a medical reason
- Refusing to go to school or classes
- Spending too much time on screens as a distraction

Teachers and parents need to look out for these signs and take action before the situation worsens. [4]

### How exam pressure affects mental health?

Today's competitive education system has turned exam pressure into a significant issue for mental health, not just a rite of passage for school kids. Being young is a vulnerable time for emotional and intellectual growth. When expectations come from parents, schools, and even friends, it can be overwhelming. Studies show that academic pressures are linked to anxiety, depression, low well-being, and low self-esteem in teenagers. [6]

### General Management of Examination Stress:

Managing examination pressure is essential for maintaining the mental and emotional well-being of students. Effective stress management begins with proper planning, such as creating a realistic study schedule for all subjects and breaking the syllabus into manageable portions to prevent last-minute cramming. Practicing stress-relief techniques like meditation and deep-breathing exercises helps calm the mind, while regular physical activity improves mood and reduces anxiety. Adequate sleep of about seven to eight hours each night is equally important to maintain concentration and overall health. Seeking support also plays a vital role; professional exam stress counselling can provide personalized coping strategies, and open

communication with parents, teachers, or friends helps reduce emotional burden. In addition, maintaining a healthy lifestyle by consuming balanced meals, staying well hydrated, and limiting caffeine intake supports steady energy levels and prevents worsening of anxiety during examination periods.<sup>[11]</sup>

### Homoeopathic concept:<sup>[8]</sup>

In § 214, Dr. Hahnemann explains that a patient with a mental or emotional illness should be treated just like any other patient. He adds, "What I have to teach about the cure of mental and emotional disease comes down to very little; they are to be cured in exactly the same way as all other diseases, not differently. That is, with a remedy, a disease agent capable of producing in the body and psyche of healthy people symptoms as similar as possible to those of the case." In § 226, he states, "In mild psycho-somatic disease, you can help them before it has extended too much; we can help them greatly with psychotherapy and good living."<sup>[5]</sup>

### How Homeopathy Can Help?

Homeopathy focuses on how an individual reacts emotionally and physically to stress. It doesn't just look at the symptoms. By prescribing remedies that match your mental state and physical signs, homeopathy aims to restore balance and soothe the nervous system naturally. Unlike sedatives, homeopathic remedies do not create dependency, are safe for all ages, and do not impair mental clarity. This makes them ideal.<sup>[7]</sup>

### Homoeopathic management:<sup>[9][10]</sup>

Aconitum Napellus refers to acute anxiety, restlessness, and restlessness before an event such as an exam or presentation

- **Argentum Nitricum** is ideal for impulsive individuals who behave irritably and later regret their actions. They often act hastily out of concern for being late or missing deadlines.
- **Arsenicum album** presents as a restless feeling of anxiety and fear. This remedy

suits high achievers who are often overly picky and demanding. Their sleep suffers, and they may wake up between 12 am and 2 am with an upset stomach or anxiety.

- **Calcarea Phosphoricum** is great for children who often feel bored and complain. They cannot calmly move from one thing to another. They may experience headaches with fatigue, abdominal pain, and leg cramps during rapid growth, along with cravings for salty foods like French fries and bacon.
- **Gelsemium** is excellent for anticipatory anxiety. People expecting even simple things with fear can feel tired, apathetic, withdrawn, and unable to think clearly. Symptoms such as drowsiness, headaches, heavy, droopy eyes, and painless diarrhoea are common and can lead to restless sleep.
- **Kalium Phosphoricum** serves as a nerve nutrient for mental and physical distress from excitement, overwork, or worry. Students may experience headaches, weakness, and malaise. A buzzing sound in the ear and weak eyesight are also common. This remedy is a great nerve tonic to use regularly during stressful times like exams or public performances. Combine with other remedies as needed.
- **Lycopodium** lacks courage and confidence, harbouring fears of upcoming exams and fear of failure. These individuals are often irritable, sarcastic, and bossy at home. They may have headaches from hypoglycaemia due to not eating, digestive issues like "butterflies" in the stomach, diarrhoea, loose stools, and excessive gas.
- **Nux Vomica** is generally tense and anxious, often appearing hostile and picky. They are sensitive to sound, light, and smell. Lack of sleep due to indigestion from overeating or excessive coffee consumption leads to waking between 3 am and 5 am, resulting in a grumpy and irritable mood. This may be accompanied by a cough.

- **Silicia** helps with concentration and memory problems in teenagers who lack stamina, fear failure, and feel overwhelmed by too much work. They tend to be hard-working and attentive to detail.
- **Sulphur** talks in their sleep, moans, snores, and crawls out of bed with hot feet during restless nights. They may appear lazy and absent-minded, dislike studying with music playing, and tend to cause disruption around them.
- **Picric acid** is useful for physical symptoms arising from overstudy, especially headaches that typically start at the back of the head. Prolonged study can cause mental strain, leading to difficulties in concentration and organizing thoughts.

Constitutional homeopathic prescribing, or classical prescribing, is a holistic form of medicine that has been practiced for over 200 years. Constitution refers to a person's physical and mental makeup, expressed through their physical build, characteristics, preferences, aversions, and reactions, including emotional and intellectual traits. Constitutional homeopathic remedies are selected based on a thorough study of the patient's constitution. This medicine must act deeply and have the power to address the illness at its root. [2]

Almost every student experience some stress during exams. A carefully chosen homeopathic remedy tailored to the individual may help with the mental, emotional, and physical symptoms of stress by triggering the body's ability to heal itself.

#### **Review of related studies:**

The article "*Examination stress and changes in mood and health-related behaviours*" (Ogden & Mtandabari, 1997) examines how examination stress affects university students' psychological well-being and everyday health behaviours, finding that exam periods are associated with increased anxiety and depression alongside negative behavioural changes such as increased smoking, reduced exercise, and poorer eating habits, while alcohol consumption tended to

decrease, possibly due to academic focus. Using a longitudinal design with measurements taken before and during exams, and a comparison control group, the study demonstrates that examination stress acts as a natural stressor that influences health not only through mood changes but also via behavioural pathways. Importantly, the findings highlight that social support can buffer some negative effects of stress, whereas avoidance-based coping strategies are linked to poorer health behaviours, suggesting that how students cope with stress plays a crucial role in determining its impact. Overall, the study contributes to stress and health psychology by showing that short-term academic stress can have meaningful implications for both mental health and health-related behaviours. [12]

The article "Examination stress in academic students: a multimodal, real-time, real-life investigation of reported stress, social contact, blood pressure, and cortisol" (Koudela-Hamila et al., *Journal of American College Health*, 2020) reports on a study that tracked 154 undergraduate students using daily psychological diaries and physiological measures taken at the beginning of the semester and again right before exams, finding that the exam period was linked not only to clear increases in stress and negative mood—such as lower calmness, more stress and demands, reduced perceived control and social interaction, and a stronger desire to be alone—but also to measurable physiological changes like lower daytime blood pressure and altered cortisol patterns at awakening, suggesting anticipatory stress responses and withdrawal effects during academic assessments; overall, the research humanizes exam stress by showing that it isn't just a subjective feeling but a real, everyday emotional and bodily experience for students that affects how they think, feel, behave socially, and regulate stress hormones. [13]

#### **CONCLUSION**

Examination stress is a common experience among students and, while a certain level of stress can motivate learning and

performance, excessive stress can negatively affect mental health, physical well-being, academic outcomes, and social relationships. Factors such as fear of failure, high academic expectations, poor time management, peer pressure, and inadequate preparation significantly contribute to exam-related anxiety. Research shows that exam stress leads to emotional disturbances, unhealthy behaviours, and even measurable physiological changes, highlighting its seriousness beyond a temporary emotional state. Early recognition of stress symptoms and the adoption of effective coping strategies such as proper planning, healthy lifestyle habits, emotional support, and relaxation techniques are essential in minimizing its harmful effects. A holistic approach, including individualized homoeopathic management, may further support students by addressing stress at mental, emotional, and physical levels, thereby promoting overall well-being and helping students navigate academic challenges more effectively.

#### **Declaration by Authors**

**Ethical Approval:** Not applicable

**Source of Funding:** None

**Conflict of Interest:** No conflicts of interest declared.

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How to cite this article: Vidya Chatse, Santosh Hande, Nisanth KM Nambison. Examination stress: impact on mental health and homoeopathic management. *International Journal of Research and Review*. 2026; 13(3): 226-231. DOI: [10.52403/ijrr.20260326](https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20260326)

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