**Comparison of nutrition, body composition, and perceived quality of health in adults with low or moderate perceived stress**

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Chronic stress is associated with systemic inflammation that can have negative health consequences. Nutrition and body composition have previously been shown to modulate the effects of stress.

**Purpose:** To evaluate differences in nutritional intake, body composition, and perceived quality of health between adults with low and moderate levels of self-reported stress. A secondary aim was to evaluate these differences in men and women.

**Methods:** 102 healthy adults (57% female; Mean ± SD; age: 26.7±6.7 yrs; BMI: 25.1±4.0 kg/m2) were separated into low (n=58; 55% female) or moderate (n=44; 57% female) stress based on results from a 10 question Perceived Stress Scale. Three-day diet logs were analyzed for average calories, and grams of protein, carbohydrates, fat, saturated fat, sugar, and fiber. Dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry was used to assess body composition (percent body fat, fat mass, fat free mass, and visceral fat). Overall quality of health (poor, fair, good, excellent) was self-reported.

**Results:** There were no significant differences in nutrition (p=0.334-0.990) or body composition (p=0.581-0.970) between stress groups. Overall quality of health was significantly higher in the low (mean: 3.34 ± 0.608) compared to the moderate stress group (mean: 2.91 ± 0.603) (p=0.003). When separated by sex, the same patterns were observed in both men and women.

**Conclusion:** Nutrition and body composition did not appear to differ between low and moderate stress groups, but individuals with low stress reported greater overall quality of health. Future research could consider evaluating samples with greater stress variations.