

Abstract

Humor and laughter are widely considered to be stress reducing variables. Prior studies have indicated that mirthful laughter is linked to a decrease in inflammatory biomarkers which are released during a stress response; however, we considered the possibility that this may not be true for all types of humor. We sought to find whether one's preferred humor type could be related to their levels of inflammatory biomarkers, IL6 and CRP. To answer this, we defined 4 unique humor categories (affiliative, self-enhancing, self-defeating, aggressive). We then placed participants into these categories based off of their responses to a 16-question survey and compared these personality traits to peripheral IL6 and CRP levels as measured by plasma samples. Results indicated that on average, participants with more negative humor types displayed higher levels of IL6 and CRP. These results suggest that one's sense of humor is indicative of certain inflammatory biomarker levels and thus stress levels. These findings are noteworthy because of their real-world application in providing a potential route to better understand and provide treatment for stress-derived health issues.