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## PREDICTORS OF STRESS AMONG TUNISIAN STUDENTS

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**Introduction:** Gaining access to university is a potential stressful situation. This stress results from external factors such as lifestyle change, academic stress and family relationship dysfunction but also other factors of personal vulnerability as neuroticism. These factors may represent a risk in student's mental and physical health. The objective of this work is to extract the various predictors of stress among Tunisian students.

**Methods:** To evaluate the perceived stress among students, we used the specific scale of perceived stress (Boujut E, Bruchon-Schweitzer M, 2003). Neuroticism among students was evaluated using the Neuroticism scale of the NEO-PI-R (Costa and McCrae, 1985). Both scales have been validated among Tunisian students. Students also answered a general questionnaire with questions relating to conditions of life like the type of lodgment and socio-economic status of parents. Our study was conducted on a representative sample of university students (n = 500) randomly selected. The correlation between perceived stress and neuroticism and between perceived stress and the various issues was measured by Pearson's  $r$ .

**Results:** The Pearson coefficient showed a weak correlation between the total score of perceived stress and neuroticism score  $r = 0.42$ . The correlation between the total score of perceived stress and some questions of the questionnaire was good; like the type of housing, socio-economic level, the means of transport used to go to school;  $p < 0.05$  for each of these issues.

**Conclusion:** Stress among Tunisian students is due to external factors rather personal factors.