Allostatic Load and Subjective Disease Risk Predicts Perceived Environmental Control

Abstract

The development of our cognition, perceptual abilities, and fears are pervasive throughout our lifespan. Embodied chronic stress, known as allostatic load, may be such a factor that adversely impacts aging across our development. Perceived control over our environment is influenced by chronic stressors, as certain psychosocial facets of allostatic load have been found to impact these very environmental affordances. This study examines the relationship between subjective feelings of age, subjective disease risk, chronic condition status, facets of allostatic load, and perceived environmental control and mastery. The present study has utilized the third wave of the MIDUS data collection project and the collected measures of chronological and subjective age, subjective cancer and heart attack risk, and perceived control. The study found that an older subjective age significantly predicted variability in perceived control, above that of subjective disease risk and the number of chronic conditions.

Methods