



Validity of the Neck Meridian Test as a Measure of Stress

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ABSTRACT

The neck meridian test is a procedure in which the participant is requested to stretch the neck in four directions and rate the intensity of pain felt and/or symptoms. The total score of the four responses has been shown to correlate with the level of perceived stress, and it has been suggested that it may be possible to use this test as a measure of perceived stress. The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of experimentally induced stress on the neck meridian test score. It was predicted that the neck meridian test score would increase only in participants who were exposed to stress manipulation. The participants were 19 male and 9 female college students (age, 34.1 ± 9.37 years) majoring in acupuncture and moxibustion medicine. The participants were randomly assigned to a stress group and a control group. All participants were requested to rest for 3 min and then complete the neck meridian test. Subsequently, they were administered a stress questionnaire. The participants in the stress group were instructed to prepare mentally for 3 min for a small 1-min examination that included performance in front of a judge, while those in the control group were requested to rest for additional 3 min. After each period, the participants completed the neck meridian test and were administered a stress questionnaire. The stress score increased significantly only in the stress group, indicating that the experimental protocol was a valid means of inducing a stressed state. The neck meridian test score also increased only in the stress group, providing supporting evidence that the neck meridian test is a valid tool for assessing perceived stress. It is suggested that the test could be used in future studies applying techniques of acupuncture and moxibustion medicine to stress care.

KEYWORDS

Neck Meridian Test; Perceived Stress; Acupuncture and Moxibustion Medicine

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