Gender differences in stressors and reactions to stressors among Jordanian university students.

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Abstract

BACKGROUND:
Stress among university students has been a topic of interest for researchers and teachers for many years because it affects not only their academic performance but also their physiological and psychological health. Male and female students perceive and react to stressors differently due to their differences in appraising stressful situations.

AIMS:
The aims of this study were to examine differences in the perception of stressors and reactions to stressors between male and female Jordanian university students, and to identify the best predictors of stressors among them.

METHODS:
Descriptive cross-sectional design was employed. The Student-Life Stress Inventory was used to measure stressors and reactions to stressors of 465 male and 485 female Jordanian university students recruited through stratified random sampling.

RESULTS:
There were statistical differences between male and female students regarding their perception and reactions to stressors. Female students reported a higher perception of stressors in frustrations, conflict, pressures and changes, as well as emotional reactions to stressors. Male students reported higher behavioural and cognitive reactions to stressors than female students. Participation in stress workshops, perception of general health, and perception of stress level in general were found to predict stressors among male students, while mother's educational level, perception of general health, and perception of stress level in general were found to predict stressors among female students.

CONCLUSIONS:
This study showed that gender differences in perception of stressors and reactions to stressors are similar to previous studies conducted all over the world. Interventions can be developed to help students better cope with stress. Conducting specific stress-training programmes for male and female students will help in reducing stress levels.