The Effects of An Eighteen Day Outdoor Mountaineering Course on the Levels of Stress Experienced by Army Cadets

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Abstract

All organisms try to maintain a balance in their day to day function for maximum efficiency. Any factor interfering with this balance forces the a readjustment within the organism. This forced change is experienced as stress and as long as it is not beyond the organism's coping mechanism, it does not cause permanent damage. Outdoor courses require the subjects to undergo new experiences by removing them from their day to day routine. This is done through creation of conditions that require extreme physical endurance and application of new cognitive competencies. The study was conducted on a group of one hundred and fifty cadets undergoing an eighteen day outdoor course at the Mt. Kenya school of adventure. A pre-test and a post test on stress before and after the course. Changes in stress levels were examined in terms of cognitive functioning, emotional reaction and psychosomatic reactions to establish.