



# Stress in America™

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

February 7, 2013, 11am EDT

**CONTACT:**

Amy Dietrich, Manager of Communications and Continuing Education  
Georgia Psychological Association  
(404) 634-6272 / [amydietrich@gapsychology.org](mailto:amydietrich@gapsychology.org)

## **Health Care System Falling Short for Stress Management, Atlanta Residents Report**

*Stress and mental health not being addressed by health care system*

Atlanta residents, like Americans across the country, are finding a disconnect with what they want from their health care provider and what they actually receive, according to a new survey released today by the American Psychological Association (APA), conducted online by Harris Interactive among 2,020 U.S. adults in August 2012. In addition 212 residents of Atlanta were interviewed.

Perception of stress remains higher than what Atlanta residents consider healthy. Atlantans report an average stress level of 5.0, 1.4 points higher than what they define as a healthy level of stress (3.6 on a 10 point scale). Survey respondents in Atlanta cite money, work, and the economy as the most common sources of stress, more so than adults nationwide (money: 73 percent vs. 69 percent of adults nationwide; work: 73 percent vs. 65 percent; economy: 64 percent vs. 61 percent). More Atlantans in 2012 say that their stress has increased over the last year (38 percent vs. 34 percent in 2011) and cite family responsibilities as a somewhat or very significant stressor. The data on family responsibilities as a significant source of stress has risen steadily since 2009 (64 percent in 2012 compared to 58 percent in 2011, 56 percent in 2010 and 51 percent in 2009). Atlantans report listening to music (55 percent), and exercising or walking (54 percent) as ways that they manage their stress.

In terms of the health care system, the survey shows that overall, only 33 percent of Atlanta residents give their health care an "A" grade, similar to Americans overall (31 percent). Regarding their mental and emotional health, 35 percent of Atlantans think it is extremely or very important to discuss their mental health with their health care provider, however, only 17 percent say that this happens often or always.

Similarly, fewer than a third of Atlanta residents believe that their health care provider can help them a great deal or a lot in managing their stress (28 percent vs. 24 percent nationally). And, while 36 percent of Atlantans think discussing stress management with their health care provider is extremely or very important, only 18 percent say that they have this discussion often or always. More Atlantans than Americans overall believe that psychologists can be helpful in managing stress (56 percent vs. 47 percent say they can help a great deal or a lot), making lifestyle and behavior changes (48 percent vs. 42 percent say they can help a great deal or a lot) and with issues related to work/life balance (43 percent vs. 33 percent say they can help a great deal or a lot).

“Stress can negatively affect one’s overall health, and the fact that most Atlanta residents are not discussing their stress with their health care provider is concerning,” said Atlanta-area psychologist Dr. Angela Londono-McConnell, the public education coordinator for the Georgia Psychological Association. “With Atlanta residents reporting higher levels of stress than what they consider healthy, it is important for people to talk to their provider about ways they can manage stress to prevent stress-related illness.”

Findings from the national survey, *Stress in America™: Missing the Health Care Connection*, suggest that people are not receiving what they need from their health care providers to manage stress and address lifestyle and behavior changes to improve their health. The survey showed that while Americans think it is important that health care focuses on issues related to stress and living healthier lifestyles, their experiences do not seem to match up with what they value. For example, though 32 percent of Americans say it is very/extremely important to talk with their health care providers about stress management, only 17 percent report that these conversations are happening often or always.

To read the full *Stress in America* report or to download graphics, visit [www.stressinamerica.org](http://www.stressinamerica.org).

For additional information on stress, lifestyle and behaviors, visit [www.apa.org/helpcenter](http://www.apa.org/helpcenter) and read APA’s Mind/Body Health campaign blog [www.yourmindyourbody.org](http://www.yourmindyourbody.org). Join the conversation about stress on Twitter by following @apahelpcenter and #stressAPA.

## **Methodology**

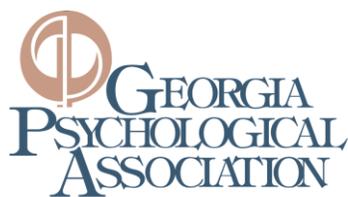
The *Stress in America* survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of the American Psychological Association between August 3 and 31, 2012, among 2,020 adults aged 18 and older who reside in the U.S. In addition, an oversample of 212 adults living in the Atlanta Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) was collected. MSAs are a formal definition of metropolitan areas produced by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. These geographic areas are delineated on the basis of central urbanized areas — contiguous counties of relatively high population density. Counties containing the core urbanized area are known as the central counties of the MSA. Additional surrounding counties (known as outlying counties) can be included in the MSA if these counties have strong social and economic ties to the central counties as measured by commuting and employment. Note that some areas within these outlying counties may actually be rural in nature. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. To read the full methodology, including the weighting variables, visit [www.stressinamerica.org](http://www.stressinamerica.org)

*The American Psychological Association, in Washington, D.C., is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and is the world's largest association of psychologists. APA's membership includes more than 137,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students. Through its divisions in 54 subfields of psychology and affiliations with 60 state, territorial and Canadian provincial associations, APA works to advance the creation, communication and application of psychological knowledge to benefit society and improve people's lives.*

*Harris Interactive is one of the world's leading market research firms, leveraging research, technology, and business acumen to transform relevant insight into actionable foresight. Known widely for the Harris Poll® and*

*for pioneering innovative research methodologies, Harris offers proprietary solutions in the areas of market and customer insight, corporate brand and reputation strategy, and marketing, advertising, public relations and communications research. Harris possesses expertise in a wide range of industries including health care, technology, public affairs, energy, telecommunications, financial services, insurance, media, retail, restaurant, and consumer package goods. Additionally, Harris has a portfolio of multi-client offerings that complement our custom solutions while maximizing our client's research investment. Serving clients in more than 196 countries and territories through our North American and European offices, Harris specializes in delivering research solutions that help us - and our clients—stay ahead of what's next. For more information, please visit [www.harrisinteractive.com](http://www.harrisinteractive.com).*

###



*Since 1946, the Georgia Psychological Association, a 501(c)(6) organization, has been heralded as a leader in advocacy, a pacesetter for public education programming, a provider of quality continuing education opportunities and a proponent for the livelihood of psychology. Our referral network not only assists members, but provides the public-at-large the opportunity to connect with psychologists. The membership of the Association is comprised of clinical psychologists, academicians, industrial and organizational psychologists, graduate and undergraduate students across the state of Georgia.*