

## **Stress and Use of Information Technology Among College Students**

*Michele L. Pettit and Tracy Caravella, University of Wisconsin–La Crosse, La Crosse, WI*

Upon conclusion of this poster session, participants will be able to: (a) explain the concept of technostress, (b) describe the impact of information technology on college students' stress, and (c) describe the influence of information technology on mindfulness. College students are inundated with information technology on a daily basis. In educational environments, skill development for using information technology is encouraged and expected. However, aside from concerns regarding the influence of information technology on sedentary behavior, little emphasis is placed on health implications of information technology. Weil and Rosen (1998) coined the term "technostress" to describe stress-related effects of information technology. The purpose of this study was to explore the phenomenon of technostress by determining the impact of a day without information technology on selected college students' stress. Undergraduate students enrolled in a Stress Management and Relaxation Skills course at a Midwestern university spent a day without the use of technological devices (e.g., television, cell phone, iPod/MP3 player, computer, etc.) and subsequently completed a self-assessment form and reflection describing their experiences. Approximately half (n= 34, 51.5%) of the 66 participants successfully completed a day without use of information technology. Of those who successfully completed a day without information technology, 10 (29%) reported feeling less stressed, 18 (52%) reported feeling more stressed, 28 (82%) indicated that they were challenged to reevaluate use of information technology in their lives, and 13 (38%) planned to change their everyday use of information technology. Of the 32 (48%) participants who did not successfully complete the assignment, 9 (28%) watched television, 24 (75%) used a cell phone, 2 (6%) used an iPod/MP3 player, 11 (34%) used a computer, and 3 (9%) reported using other technological devices (e.g., GPS). Findings from this study present implications for health educators involved in planning and delivering programs related to stress management. Specifically, findings can be applied to strategies for promoting mindfulness among college students.