

EXAMINATION STRESS AND SERUM LIPIDS

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The serum lipid profile of four medical students was determined 5 wk before, 1 wk before and 4 wk after a 'professional' examination. The lipid profile of eight other medical students, on a comparable diet, but having no professional examination, was also determined at the corresponding points in time. Serum cholesterol as well as its various fractions increased by about 30% a week before the examinations in the exam-going students, the average rise for total cholesterol, VLDL, LDL and HDL cholesterol, being 29.4%, 30.4%, 25.8% and 37.8%, respectively. The corresponding figures for the control group were 6.8%, 12.8%, 6.9% and -0.37%, respectively. Four wk after the examinations, the levels (except VLDL) in exam-going students returned close to those 5 wk before the examinations. Mental stress appears to be the most plausible explanation for the observed elevations in lipid levels in exam-going students.

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