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<sup>1</sup> Reprinted with permission from Three In One Concepts

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## Abstract

Stress is a mechanism that assists the body to deal with emergency situations and a response to a set of external or internal stimuli (Selye, 1956). In our society stress is a major contributing factor in illness, absenteeism, reduced productivity, increased health care costs and other adverse health consequences for the individual (Easton, 1997, Nixon & King, 1997).

In Australia, there is increasing use of complementary therapies to reduce stress and stress related symptoms. One such complementary therapy is Three In One. This approach combines concepts from body-mind medicine, brain function and Eastern philosophy to identify and address the client's negative emotional stress. Three In One is practised worldwide. There has been extensive anecdotal evidence that the Three In One approach is successful in reducing clients' perception of stress and improving their ability to cope with life stressors. However there is a lack of substantiated data into Three In One effectiveness, making this an area ripe for research and evaluation.

In this study a quasi-experimental design was used with the one-group pre-test, post-test design to evaluate the effectiveness of Three In One in the reduction of stress. Using a triangulated approach, clients' perception of their stress was measured pre and post consultation series and clients' comments assessed to add meaning and understanding. Consultant comments were collected to add a secondary source of data and allow the researcher to check for accuracy and reliability.

Over thirteen months, fifteen Three In One consultants collected data from a total of eighty-one new clients. Clients had an average of four Three In One consultations on their presenting issue.

This study showed a significant reduction of clients' stress (37%,  $p < 0.0005$ ) measured by Perceived Stress Scale -14, bringing their stress down on average to the population mean. Clients also reported a significant reduction of their stress on their presenting issue (65%,  $p < 0.0005$ ). Clients attributed the Three In One approach as 70% of the cause of this reduction in stress and improvement in coping skills, almost double the contribution of all other factors.

In relation to specific symptoms, over the period of these consultations clients reported a significant reduction in their pain (72%,  $p < 0.0005$ ). There was also a significant reduction in physical symptoms, interpersonal difficulties, interpersonal conflict and a significant improvement in energy levels for those clients who reported these symptoms. This was further supported qualitatively by clients' comments. They reported that the Three In One approach resulted in a greater understanding of themselves and their issues feelings of wellbeing, happiness and a greater sense of empowerment.

This study suggests that a series of Three In One consultations by qualified consultants is an approach that reduces stress and assists healing. The positive results of this study indicate that replicated studies to verify the results would be worthwhile.