

Case Study
Chapter 9, Stress and Adaptation

A 25-year-old college student is seen in an outpatient setting with the chief complaint of difficulty sleeping. He states he has been having problems with sleep for the past 4 weeks. He has not been eating well, has noted an increase in stomach pain, and states he feels anxious all the time. He states he is in his fourth year of college and will be graduating in 1 month. When the nurse examines him, she finds the following: pulse 100, R 18, BP 130/90. His skin is diaphoretic and he appears anxious.

1. Which of the clinical manifestations seen in this patient can be produced by stimulation of the sympathetic portion of the autonomic nervous system?

2. The adrenal cortex is also stimulated during the stress response. What specific monitoring by the nurse would be important to note the impact of this stress response?

3. How does the immune system respond to chronic stressors? How might this response impact this young college student during his last month in school?

(Learning Objectives 5, 7, 11)