

STRESS AND CORTISOL BEFORE AND AFTER ELECTIONS IN A GROUP OF VOTERS FROM CARABOBO STATE, VENEZUELA

ABSTRACT

Objective: Compare levels of stress and serum cortisol in a group of voters in the state of Carabobo, before and after the electoral process in April 2013.

Methods: The study was observational, correlational and longitudinal. The sample consisted of 122 voters registered in the electoral registry for the presidential elections of April 2013, aged from 25 to 55 years old residing at Carlos Arvelo, Naguanagua, Miguel Peña and Valencia, municipalities from Carabobo State, in Venezuela, to which the instrument "Reactivity Index to Stress" was applied, which measures the individual responses of cognitive, emotional, behavioral and somatic type in the organism when it is in recognized as stressful situations. Serum cortisol was determined before and after the electoral date, in a period not exceeding 8 days.

Results: The 67.2% of the voters were female. We found significant results when comparing total stress, emotional, cognitive and behavioral responses ($p = 0.000$, $p = 0.028$, $p = 0.010$, $p = 0.009$ respectively). Likewise, it was evidenced that there was no significance with cortisol and somatic stress before and after the electoral process.

Conclusion: The electoral process of April 2013 had an impact on the voter, who presented mild, moderate and severe stress, as well as the different responses (emotional, behavioral and cognitive) before and after the electoral process; this situation can cause damages in the organism.

Keywords: Stress, Cortisol, Serum, Voters, Electoral Process.