

**STRESS: COHEN**  
**STRESS AND THE IMMUNE SYSTEM**

**Aim:** to investigate the link between stress and the immune system

**Procedures:**

- ❑ 394 healthy individuals were asked to complete a questionnaire that indicated how stressed they perceived themselves to be
- ❑ Each participant was given a stress index (1=little stress etc)
- ❑ Participants were then exposed to one of five strains of the common cold via nasal drops.
- ❑ Cohen then waited to see how many of the participants actually developed a cold

**Findings**

- ❑ One third of the participants developed a cold
- ❑ The higher the stress index, the more likely they were to develop a cold

**Conclusions:**

- ❑ There is a direct link between stress and the immune system.
- ❑ It appears that stress reduces the efficiency of the immune system

**Criticisms:**

- ❑ The fact that the cold virus was administered via nasal drops excludes the factor that the participants were stressed by the procedure (using an injection may have produced more stress and interfered with the results)
- ❑ This was an experimental design with high internal validity and causality can be deduced
- ❑ Data collected was quantitative which means it could be accurately measured and interpreted
- ❑ Extraneous variables could be controlled
- ❑ Immune system is very complex as we do not yet know enough about it to draw firm conclusions from these results