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PRESENTS:

CORTISOL. JAMES CORTISOL.

Measuring the levels of cortisol of 62 top managers, that closely followed SAM scale tests revealed the wide discrepancy between self-reported and independently measured levels of salivary cortisol.

Following semi-structured interviews uncovered that the reason is not that they would get used to the levels, but rather the fear of being discovered as weak and vulnerable in the full knowledge of the high level of stress they experience.

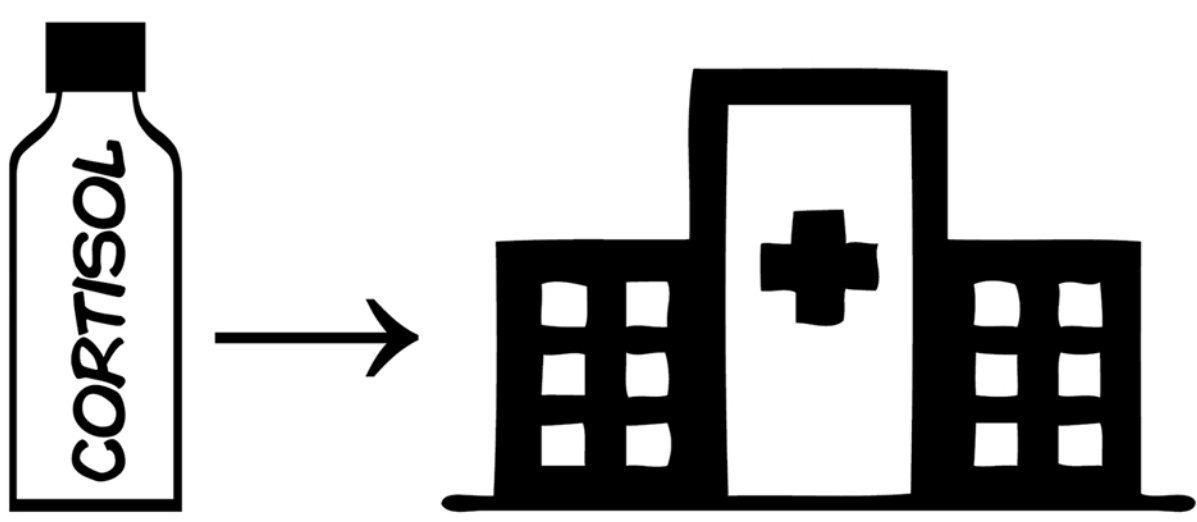
WHAT ABOUT THE MANAGERS THAT ARE AT THE TOP OF OUR ORGANISATIONS? THEY MAKE DECISIONS THAT DIRECTLY AFFECT OUR LIVING. DO THEY LIE ABOUT THEIR STRESS LEVEL? OR IS IT OPTIMISM BIAS? JAMES CORTISOL'S MISSION IS TO FIND OUT THE TRUTH.



62 MANAGERS



SALIVETTE TEST TUBES MEASURING AFTERNOON SALIVARY CORTISOL



LABORATORY RESULTS

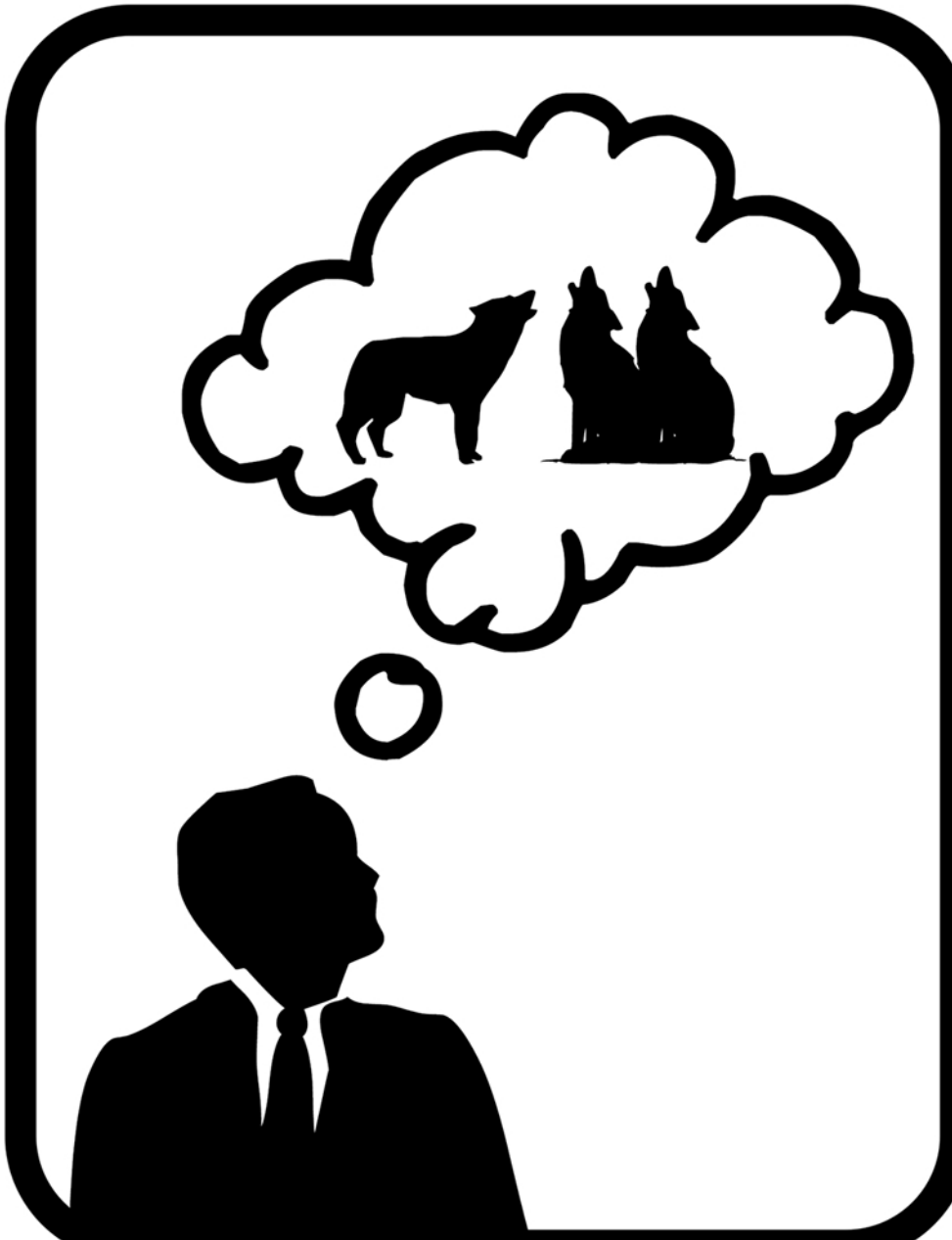
HIGH LEVELS, MONEYPENNY

BAM



SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS FOUND OUT THAT MOST OF THE MANAGERS KNEW THEY WERE IN A LOT OF STRESS, HOWEVER, THAT THEY HAVE TO HIDE IT IN FRONT OF THEIR COLLEAGUES, EMPLOYEES AND OFTEN FAMILY TOO.

SEVERAL OF THEM USED WORDS LIKE "I LIVE AMONG THE WOLVES AND IF I SHOW ANY WEAKNESS I AM DONE FOR".



EVERYBODY LIES!

WHEN DR. HOUSE SAYS HIS FAMOUS QUOTE "EVERYBODY LIES" HE MEANS THE PATIENTS AND THEIR MOTIVES. THEY WISH FOR TREATMENT BUT DO NOT REVEAL THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THEIR ILLNESS.

MANAGERS REVEALED MOST OF THIS INFORMATION AS THEY BELIEVED THE TRUTH WILL SHOW UP ANYWAY BY THE HARD WORK OF OUR AGENT JAMES CORTISOL. OTHERWISE, ACCORDING TO THEIR STATEMENTS, THEY WOULD LIE TO THE RESEARCHER AS WELL.

Methodology

Using Salivette test tubes measuring afternoon salivary cortisol and comparing the results to 5-point Self-Assessment-Manikin Scales to assess the validity of the responses that were administered before taking cortisol samples.

Semi-structured interviews to find out the reasons for managers not telling the truth in SAM scales.

Sample: 62 of Czech top managers of different age, sectors and number of employees.

Results

None of the managers in the sample revealed their perceived stress levels. The possibility of them not being aware of it was abrogated by semi-structured interviews. Among other arguments, the similarities were found around the concept of them being predators among other predators without a possibility of showing any weakness.

48 managers of the total sample (62) partially or fully confirmed that they are aware of the long-term increased burden and possible consequences of high stress.

16 managers insisted they felt no stress at the beginning of the interviews. All of these 16 managers belong to a group with very high cortisol levels.

12 managers in the interview admitted that they have long been in a very strong "pressure", "push", "not managing". All of them confirmed a significant increase in salivary cortisol (about 14nmol/l).

Discussion

Top managers in the sample knowingly take the risk of making a mistake against the risk of losing a contract or damaging their professional growth in a given company or industry.

The possibility of being discovered by the cortisol test (secret agent James Cortisol) made them to reveal the true nature of their perceived stress, leading to rationalization for this approach as a research beneficial side effect. However, this might lead to a wider issue and thus subsequent research should follow.

Possible biases of the research:

Small sample means there cannot be any attempt to generalize the results. Strong need for rationalization of their lies could mean that a social desirability bias is present.

Possible hypotheses to be tested:

Top managers do not reveal their perceived levels of stress intentionally. Top managers do not acknowledge the truth unless there is the independent known factor to prove the lie.

References

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