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Workplace stress in health care workers—A Research on selected Multi Specialty hospitals in Thiruvarur District of Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

This paper describes the perceptions of workplace stress among the Health care workers in selected Multi specialty hospitals in Thiruvarur district. The main aim of this study was to investigate exposure to stress at work in Healthcare sector. A self structured questionnaire was adopted to accomplish the research objectives through the responses from 55 Healthcare workers in selected Hospitals. Various statistical tools and methods such as descriptive statistics and chi square tests, etc., have been used to analyze the data. The results of the study reveals that occupational sources of stress such as work overload, time pressure, personal income and difficult ill helpless patients appeared to be the most stressful for health care workers. In addition a variety of personal family and social factors were also identified as least stressful stressors. This information may be useful for the healthcare sectors in formulating policies and strategies to help the workers relieve and cope with their work related stress.

Keywords: Occupational stress, Healthcare, Hospitals, Family and social factors.

1. Introduction

The National Institute for occupational safety and Health (NIOSH) (1999) [9] define occupational stress as 'the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources or needs of the worker'. According to Selye (1974) [14] stress is 'any external event or internal drive which threatens to upset the organismic equilibrium'.

ILO (1986) it is recognized world wide as a major challenge to individual mental, physical and organizational health.

Occupational stress has been a long-standing concern of the healthcare industry. Studies indicate that healthcare workers have higher rate of substance abuse and suicide than other professions and elevated rates of depression and anxiety linked to the job stress. In addition to psychological distress, other outcomes of job stress include burnout, absenteeism, employee intent to leave, reduced patient satisfaction, diagnosis and treatment errors. Although coping strategies and social resources can modify the reaction to occupational stresses to some degree. Keeping this in mind this paper is an attempt to perceive workplace stress among health care workers.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is

- To identify the sources of workplace stress.
- To analyze the level of work stress among the health care workers.
- To identify the strategies for minimizing workplace stress of health care workers

2. Methodology

The present study was carried out among the healthcare workers working in seven well known multi specialty hospitals in Thiruvarur district. The study was descriptive and analytical in nature. Both primary and secondary data were used for data collection. Primary data was collected using well structured questionnaire and secondary data was collected from books, research papers, web resources and journals. The sampling design was non-probability convenience sampling. A total of 55 health care workers working in multi specialty hospitals were included for the present study.

3. Data Analysis and Interpretations

The collected data were scrutinized, edited and tabulated using Simple percentage, standard deviation, mean, rank and chi-square test were used to analyze the data.

Table 1: Demographic and professional characteristics of the Health care workers

Criterion		No of Respondents (55)	Percentage (%)
Age (years)	18-25	28	50.90
	26-40	15	27.28
	41 and above	12	21.82
	Total	55	100.00
Gender	Male	17	30.90
	Female	38	69.10
	Total	55	100.00
Marital status	Single	31	56.36
	Married	24	43.64
	Total	55	100.00
Monthly income	5000-10000	36	65.45
	10001-15000	11	20.00
	>15000	8	14.55
	Total	55	100.00
Educational level	Degree	17	30.90
	Diploma	30	54.55
	Others	8	14.55
	Total	55	100.00
Designation	Nurse	18	32.73
	Pharmacist	06	10.91
	Medical technician	10	18.18
	Administration staff	07	12.73
	House keeper	14	25.45
	Total	55	100.00
Experience	Less than 5	32	18.88
	5-10	13	23.64
	More than 10	10	58.18
	Total	55	100.00

Source: Primary Data.

Table 1 indicates that demographic and professional characteristics of the respondent. The respondent in this study 31% were male and 69% were female. The majority of the respondents in this study were unmarried (56%) and the 44% of the respondent reported themselves as married. All the respondents in this study ranged in age from 21-50 years. 51% of the respondents were between the ranges of 18-25 years, 27% of the respondents were between the range of 26-

40 years and 22% of the respondents were between ranges of 41-50 years. About nearly 55% of the respondents were diploma and nearly 17% had bachelor degree and only very limited workers having other than degree and diploma. The study shows that 58% of the respondent less than 5 years of experience, 24% of the respondents have experience between the ranges of 5-10 years and 18% of respondent have experience of more than 10 years. Also shows that the majority of 66% of workers were the income ranges from 5000-10000. 20% of the respondent were income level range from 10001-15000 and only very limited respondent 14% income level above 15000.

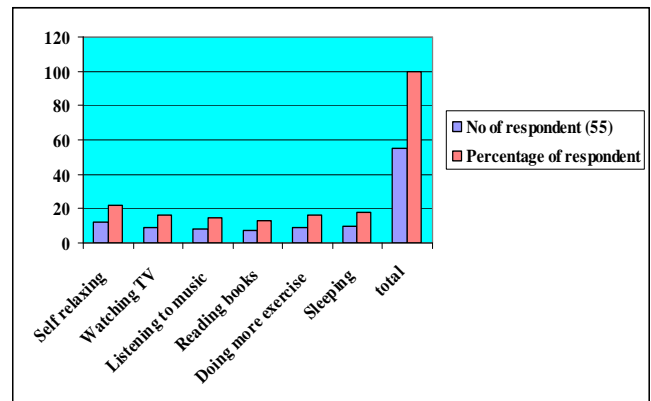


Chart 1: Opinion about stress management techniques

Table 2: Opinion about stress management techniques.

S. No	Techniques	No of respondent (55)	Percentage of respondent
1	Self relaxing	12	21.82
2	Watching TV	9	16.36
3	Listening to music	8	14.55
4	Reading books	7	12.73
5	Doing more exercise	9	16.36
6	Sleeping	10	18.18
	Total	55	100.00

Source: Primary data

From the above information it can be observed that nearly 22% of the respondents using self relaxing techniques, 12.73% of respondents using reading books, for reduce the stress.

Table 3: Factors influencing work place stress in Health care workers

S.no	Sources of stress	Very high	High	moderate	Low	Very low	Mean score	Rank
1	Long working hours	30	13	6	3	3	4.164	III
2	Personal income	42	8	3	2	0	4.638	I
3	Managing patient behaviors	24	8	10	8	5	3.689	VI
4	Family problems	12	7	9	17	10	2.889	XVII
5	Lack of social support	19	14	7	8	7	3.544	XI
6	Mental depression	9	11	23	7	5	3.2184	XIII
7	Helpless patient	16	11	8	9	11	3.213	XIV
8	Unfair management practices	24	8	9	6	8	3.6158	IX
9	Poor working conditions	16	12	15	7	5	3.6641	VIII
10	Job insecurity	32	9	7	4	3	4.1353	IV
11	Role of ambiguity	13	7	27	6	8	3.179	XV
12	Poor interpersonal relationship	16	10	9	8	12	3.167	XVI
13	Shift working hours	26	8	10	5	6	4.399	II
14	Inadequate staff	16	9	11	9	10	3.218	XIII
15	Exposure to in toxic and hazardous substances	24	8	10	8	5	3.68	VII
16	Dealing with difficult or serious inpatients	28	7	9	6	5	3.85	V
17	Exposure to work related violence or threads from public.	23	5	7	9	11	3.336	XII
18	Financial and economic factors	24	9	8	5	9	3.61	X

From the table 3, it is inferred that the personal income of the healthcare workers with high mean score of 4.638 is provided to be the most important factors that influence the stress of the workers. Second with mean score of work shift is 4.39, long working hour is ranked as third with the mean score of 4.16. Job security is ranked as fourth with the mean score of 4.13, dealing with difficulty or serious in patient is ranked fifth with mean score of 3.85. Followed by managing patient behaviors, exposure to in toxic and hazardous substance, poor working conditions, unfair management practices, financial and economic future, lack of social support and poor interpersonal relationship. Hence it is concluded that personal income and work shift is considered as most important factor that influenced to stress.

Table 4: Chi-square analysis associate between Gender and Job insecurity and also between Age and Long working hour.

Factor	Calculated value	Table value	Degrees of freedom	Remarks
Gender and Job insecurity	6.531	9.488	4	Significant at 5% level
Age and Long working hours	9.434	15.507	8	Significant at 5% level

Source: Compiled by the researcher

The (table 4) shows that chi-square analysis associate between gender and job insecurity and also associate between Age and long working hours of the respondent. Since, the calculated value is less than the table value at five (0.05) percent level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted.

4. Findings

- The level of work place stress among the health care worker is high.
- A large proportion of individual with low income reported higher job insecurity and job stress.
- There is no significant difference between the male and female healthcare workers in respect of work place stress.
- The majority of 69% of the female workers were participated in this study
- It was found that 65% of the respondents felt that inadequate pay is major source of work stress
- Also found that most of the employees using some stress management techniques to reduce the stress such as self relaxation, sleeping and watching television etc.

5. Recommendations

In view of finding drawn in this study, it is therefore recommended that

- ❖ To clearly defines workers role and responsibility.
- ❖ Providing redesign payment structure of the worker.
- ❖ Periodic evaluations of the stress interventions.
- ❖ To implement more stress management techniques. It improves health and good intra personnel relationship.

6. Conclusion

Work place stress is a real challenge for Healthcare workers and their employing health care organizations. Based on this findings concludes that stress among healthcare workers as

in present days they are lots of problems in workplace. Without healthy and motivated workers in the health sector, the public health goals of the countries cannot be met. So the researcher feels it was very important and necessary to understand the reasons behind the stress. Thus hospital administration should pay attention to solve their issues, such as adequate pay, lack of resources, inadequate staffs, lack off equipments and co-workers support. It may increase the job performances and stress free environment in the organizations.

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