



Stress management among employees in health care sector and strategies to overcome

Dr P V Raveendra Professor

Dr Arun Kumar D C Assistant Professor

Dr Vijaya Kumar G Assistant Professor

M S Ramaiah Institute of Technology, Bengalure, Karnataka

Abstract:

Health care workers toil in some of the most difficult circumstances, and the pandemic has only increased the pressure on them, which means they need to find more ways to de-stress. This research involves the study of stress that the employees in healthcare sector experiencing throughout the pandemic and the strategies to overcome the stress. Data was collected using structured questionnaire from nurses and other staff. The sample for the study consisted of a total of 100 employees, determined by the judgmental sampling method. ANOVA was used to test hypotheses to find the relationship between age and stress and the relationship between work-life balance and stress. Majority of the respondents are highly suffering from stress during pandemic and most of them are female employees, in which most of them are suffering from depression and anxiety at work. It was also found that this stress is mainly due to their work load, responsibilities, and physical assaults that they experienced during the pandemic. Another important finding is that there is no relationship between age, work-life balance, and stress. It is important for the organisation to give proper guidance and training to overcome such situations, but here they are providing only limited resources, which are affecting them very badly.

Keyword: Stress -work life balance- health care work force- strategies

INTRODUCTION

Stress is often referred to as a negative experience that leaves us feeling overwhelmed. Stress as something negative gives us a false impression of its true nature. Stress is about our capacity to handle changes, not whether the changes are making us feel good or bad. Stress can be defined by saying that it involves a set of emotional, physical, and cognitive reactions when changes occur. Stress as a reaction to changes is not necessarily bad but could also be a good thing sometimes [1]. Stress occurs at work and depends on the importance of worker characteristics or working conditions as its primary cause. Stress related disorders have a broad array of conditions which includes psychological disorders (e.g., depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder) and other types of emotional strain (e.g., dissatisfaction, fatigue, tension), maladaptive behaviors like aggression and substance use, and cognitive impairment like concentration and memory problems. Job stress is associated with biological reactions which may lead to physical health such as

cardiovascular disease. [2].

There are different types of stresses including Acute stress (Acute stress is the body's immediate reaction to a new and challenging situation. Acute stress tends to happen to everyone), Episodic acute stress When one get frequent episodes of acute stress it is known as episodic stress, Chronic stress i.e., the high stress level that one experience for a long period of time can be termed as chronic stress and Eustress which is fun and exciting. It's known as a positive type of stress that can keep you energized [3].

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Many studies have been done on patients and their stress levels during the pandemic, but few studies are available from the service provider's point of view. Nurses and other staff had taken the maximum risk with their lives during the pandemic situation. They had faced problems in the hospitals as well as at home. All these lead to a high stress level among the nurses and other staff in the hospitals. Thus, this study focuses on the stress levels among nurses and other staff and strategies to overcome the stress among them. As the pandemic had come to an end in India, it prevailed in many other countries. There is no guarantee that such situations may not arise again in India. [4]. As a result, the current study attempts to explain the different types of stress that the employee is experiencing throughout the organisation and also helps in finding the techniques used by the organisation in order to reduce stress.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.To determine the stress experienced by the nurses and other staff during pandemic.
- 2.To suggest strategies to overcome the stress among the nurses and other staff

Data collection method : Primary data was collected through structured questionnaire to the stress among the nurses and other staff and various reviews were studies to suggest strategies to overcome the stress.

Sampling design: A sample of one hundred nurses and other staff were studied in the various hospitals in Thrissur district. Judgmental sampling is used in this research.

Data analysis and findings

The following are the findings from the primary data collection:

97% of the respondents experienced heavy stress, with the remaining 3% not having any stress. However, all the respondents did not have the same stress. They experienced different types of stress symptoms, as follows: 29% experienced anxiety at work, 30% experienced depression, depression, 19% experienced insomnia, and finally, 22% experienced oversensitivity.

The stress period also varied among respondents. 42% of respondents had their stress less than a month, 25% of them had 1-3 months, 21% of respondents had 6 months-1year, and 12% of them had more than one year. The severity also varied among the respondents. Six percent of the respondents faced extreme condition, 35% respondents faced a severe condition; 23% respondents faced a mild condition and 36 % respondents faced average or moderate stress.

Many hospitals observed this situations and take some measures to reduce the stress. Providing relaxation time is one such measure. However, the time varied from one hospital to other hospital. 35% of respondents got once in a while, 7% of respondents got about half the time, 8% of them got

regularly, 28% of them got most of the time and 22% of the respondents never got any relaxation time.

Hospital employees understood observed there was an increase in their stress. Some of them had taken to reduce the stress. In this regard, 30% of the workers did not make any attempts, 31% of them made one attempt, 12% of them made three attempts and 27% of them made two attempts to overcome their work stress.

The stress levels among the employees started affecting their relationships with their peers. The majority of them are able to manage this problem and saw that stress did not affect their relationships with their coworkers. In this study among the respondents, 67% : of respondents cleared that they do not having any stress with the relationship of other employees and the remaining , 33% of them were not able to manage their relationship with peers due to stress.

There are different factors for stress for different employees. factors causing work stress. 40% of them are having their job stress due to their nature of job and responsibilities, 20% of them are having due to personal health issues, 15% of them have due to physical work environment and finally 25% of them have due to the volume of the work provided in the organization.

During pandemic many workers faced difficulties to take care about patients due to lack of safety dresses. However, not all of them had the same level of problems. Among the respondents 27% of the workers only had such problems while the remaining did not have any problems.

Work-life balance is one of the major concerns due to extended working hours and tense working conditions.

27% of employees worked long hours, 20% of respondents are tired at work, and others also faced problems like inflexible working hours, etc., which affected their work-life balance.

Relationship between age and stress

Null hypothesis H0: There is no significant relationship between the age and stress of the employees.

Alternative hypothesis H1: There is a significant relationship between the age and stress of the employees.

The above hypothesis is tested using ANOVA and the resulting table is shown below. The table is generated from SPSS tool

ANOVA					
Is stress affecting your performance at work?					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.068	3	.023	.762	.518
Within Groups	2.842	96	.030		

Total	2.910	99			
-------	-------	----	--	--	--

The null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected because the calculated value is 0.518 which is

greater than the significance level 0.05.

Relationship between work life balance and stress of the employee:

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between work-life balance and stress among employees.

Similarly, ANOVA test had been done. The null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected because the calculated value is 0.778, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05 e; there is no significant difference between the work-life balance and work stress of the employee.

Suggestions: The workers can set aside time for relaxation in order to free up their minds and bodies. Create a positive work culture. Some of its ideas include having a welcome lunch for employees, team bonding activities, etc. Also, continuously try to highlight the work everyone is doing and create an open-door policy for the employees, who may feel comfortable voicing their concerns. [5]. Promote and practice healthy habits while at work like organizing group yoga, meditation, and walks with your co-workers, this will lead a great way to reduce the stress in workers. The health workers also should give additional training during the pandemic for stress reduction, such as details regarding the transmission of viruses, how and when to screen patients and family members, and when to invoke quarantine and isolation. Implement educational and training programmes that help them recognize the potential hazards and learn how to protect themselves [6]. Promote a culture of meritocracy, from which ideas can come from different genders, levels, and races, and welcome their voices; also, ensure that they are actively encouraging women to progress, such as by applying for their promotion and asking for pay rises, which helps eliminate discrimination against sex, caste, etc [7].

Conclusion: Stress is one of the most common things in everyone's life. It can be associated with any moment of life. Despite stress often being thought of as a subjective experience, levels of stress are readily measurable using various physiological tests, and measures can be taken to reduce them. Moreover, it is a notable fact that an absolute elimination of stress is unrealistic, so it is very important to manage the stress for those undergoing it. [8]. From the analysis and interpretation done in the study, we know that there are a large number of employees having high stress like depression and anxiety at work due to their job and responsibilities in the pandemic days, and most of them have made only one or two attempts to overcome their stress. In order to relieve the stress of the employees the respective organization provide them many techniques like creating quiet time, provide onsite counselling in order to reduce stress as well as physical assault and harassment from people. At the end of the study, we can conclude that stress among the employees is affecting their behavior. This can be controlled effectively and smoothly through better coordination among the workers, like organizing group yoga and meditation. On the part of

the organization, they must educate employees by providing training programmes to deal with the pandemic situation, overcome physical assault during work, and also provide them with appropriate counselling at regular intervals of time.

References

- [2]. Chaudhry, Beenish. (2021). Designing Workplace Stress Management Mobile Apps for Frontline Health Workers during COVID-19 and Beyond: A Qualitative Study (Preprint). JMIR Formative Research. 6. 10.2196/30640.
- [3] Akoko, Sokiprim & Uahomo, Precious & David, Lekpa. (2022). INFLUENCE OF LIFESTYLE ON STRESS MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SECTOR HEALTH WORKERS IN SEMI-URBAN AREA -A PRELIMINARY STUDY. Epitome : International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research. 8. 129-136. 10.36713/epira9919.
- [4] Martin, D. (2018). Effects of Stress: The Link between Pressure and Performance. Delphis. <https://delphis.org.uk/peak-erformance/effects-of-stress-the-link-between-pressure-and-performance/>
- [1] Bickford, M. (2005). Stress in the Workplace: A General Overview of the Causes, the Effects, and the Solutions. Canadian Mental Health Association, 9(10): 11-15
- [5] V. Padma, N Et al (2015). Health Problems and Stress in Information Technology and Business Process Outsourcing Employees. Pharm Bioallied Sci. 7(1): 9–11
- [6] El-Zoghby, S. M., Soltan, E. M., & Salama, H. M. (2020). Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health and social support among adult Egyptians. Journal of community health, 45(4), 689-695.
- [7] Mazza, C., Ricci, E., Biondi, S., Colasanti, M., Ferracuti, S., Napoli, C., & Roma, P. (2020). A nationwide survey of psychological distress among Italian people during the COVID-19 pandemic: immediate psychological responses and associated factors. International journal of environmental research and public health, 17(9), 3165.
- [8] Kazmi, S. S. H. (2019). Traumashastra: Biopsychosocial Perspectives of Trauma. Indian Mental Health and Research Centre.
- [9] Michie, S. (2002). Causes and Management of Stress at Work. Occupational and Environmental Medicine, 59(1), 67-72.