



ISSN: 0976-3376

Available Online at <http://www.journalajst.com>

ASIAN JOURNAL OF  
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Asian Journal of Science and Technology  
Vol. 09, Issue, 01, pp.7419-7421, January, 2018

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY TO ASSESS THE LEVEL OF STRESS AMONG THE UNDER GRADUATE NURSING STUDENTS IN SELECTED COLLEGE AT CHIDAMBARAM, TAMIL NADU

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#### ARTICLE INFO

##### Article History:

Received 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2017  
Received in revised form  
16<sup>th</sup> November, 2017  
Accepted 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2017  
Published online 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2018

##### Key words:

Nursing students,  
Stress, Tamil Nadu.

#### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Stress among nursing students is an area of growing concern. Nursing students during their professional life undergo stress which may result in psychological distress, physical complaints, behavior problem, and poor academic performance. This study was undertaken to assess the level of stress among the nursing students.

**Material and Methods:** A Descriptive Cross Sectional study was carried out in the year 2015 among 181 nursing students in a selected college at Chidambaram taluk, Tamil Nadu. Data were collected by using demographic profile and Modified Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) to assess the stress level of the participants. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data.

**Results:** The findings revealed that the overall stress level among nursing students, were under mild stress (27.6%), moderate stress (69.6%) and high stress (2.8%) also the level of stress was significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) influenced by the choice in selection of course among nursing students.

**Conclusion:** From this study, the researcher highlights that an effective intervention strategies have to be taught to the B.Sc. nursing students to relieve stress during their training period to promote stress free life.

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#### INTRODUCTION

*“God will never give you anything you can’t handle, so don’t stress”*

-Kelly Clarkson

According to the World Health Organization, stress is a significant problem of our times and affects both physical as well as the mental health of people. Stress is defined as a situation where the organism’s homeostasis is threatened or the organism perceives a situation as threatening. Stress coping methods are the cognitive, behavioral and psychological efforts to deal with stress (Graham, 2017). Stress in nursing students is an area of growing concern. Nursing students during their professional life undergo stress due to various stressors and it may result in psychological distress, physical problems and behavior problem, which in turn leads to poor academic performance. Nursing students are valuable human resources. Detection of potential stress among nursing students is crucial since stress can lead to low productivity, low quality of life, and suicidal ideas. Identifying factors affecting stress among nursing students can help nursing educators to find ways to decrease stress (Prasad, 2013).

Therefore, the researcher had special attention in exploring the stress level experienced by the B.Sc. nursing students during their course of study.

##### Objectives

- To assess the level of stress among the first and second year B.Sc nursing students.
- To associate the level of stress with selected demographic variables.

##### Limitation

The study is limited to

- Assess the stress level of the undergraduate nursing students
- Only those who were present during the time of data collection were included for the study.

#### MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Design and Sampling:** A quantitative approach with descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted during the year 2015. By using convenient sampling technique, 181 under graduate students’ nurses from first and second year were selected as samples from the selected college at Chidambaram taluk, Cuddalore district, Tamil Nadu. The samples who were

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not willing as well as who availed leave during the time of data collection were excluded from the study.

### Instruments

The demographic data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire. (Section A) and Modified Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) (Section B) developed by Sheu et al.,(2002) to assess the stress level of the subject was used.. It is a five-point likert scale that consisted of 29 items .Each item was scored on a scale of 0(never), 1(almost never), 2(sometimes), 3(fairly often) and 4(very often). The scaling was used as follows by using the mean score

### Mean:

2.67- 4.00: High Stress

1.34- 2.66: Moderate Stress.

0 - 1.33: Mild Stress.

minutes and then collected. Confidentiality was ensured. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the demographic variables and to assess the stress level of the nursing students. The inferential statistics like mean and standard deviation, ANOVA and LSD post HOC test were used to investigate the association between level of stress and demographic variables. The probability value  $p < 0.05$  was considered statistically significant.

## RESULTS

The study revealed that, the majority of the subjects were 52% in the age group of 18- 18.9 years, 50% were in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year respectively, 70% were living in the hostel, 51% were born as 1<sup>st</sup> child, 71% had own choice in selection of course, 49% with less than Rs.5000 as family monthly income, 56% of subjects spent less than 3 hours for studying/ day, 36% of subjects had 6-8 hours sleep/day. *Table 1:* depicts the overall level of stress of the under graduate nursing students, Out of 181 subjects,

**Table 1. Overall Stress Level of the Under Graduate Nursing Students**

N: 181				
S.No	Level of Stress	N	%	
1.	Mild Stress	50	27.6	
2.	Moderate Stress	126	69.6	
3.	High Stress	5	2.8	

**Table 2. Association between Level of Stress and selected demographic variables of Nursing Students**

N: 181							
S.No	Variables	N	Mean	S.D	'f' Value	'p' Value	LSD post HOS test
1.	Year of Study						
	a. First year.	91	1.60	0.60	0.34	0.56	
	b. Second year.	90	1.65	0.57			
2.	Place of Living						
	a. Hostel.	127	1.64	0.54	0.26	0.60	
	b. Staying with parents.	54	1.59	0.68			
3.	Order of birth						
	a. 1 <sup>st</sup> born.	93	1.62	0.60	0.56	0.63	
	b. 2 <sup>nd</sup> born.	53	1.70	0.55			
	c. 3 <sup>rd</sup> born.	25	1.53	0.59			
	d. 4 <sup>th</sup> born.	10	1.55	0.64			
4.	Choice in selection of course						
	a. Own choice.	129	1.58	0.56	2.76	0.04	2>1,3
	b. Forced by the parents. *	17	2.01	0.39			
	c. By chance.	28	1.61	0.66			
	d. Others.	7	1.68	0.77			
5.	Family monthly income(Rs)						
	a. <5000.	89	1.66	0.60	0.39	0.75	
	b. 5001-10000	65	1.57	0.59			
	c. 10001-20000	15	1.62	0.44			
	d. >20001	12	1.71	0.61			
6.	Hours spent for studying/day						
	a. <3 hrs.	49	1.68	0.52	1.07	0.34	
	b. 3-5hrs.	102	1.64	0.62			
	c. >5hrs.	30	1.49	0.56			
7.	Hoursof sleep/night						
	a. <6 hrs.	57	1.56	0.62	1.81	0.30	
	b. 6-8hrs.	66	1.61	0.53			
	c. >8 hrs.	58	1.72	0.60			

S- Significant.\* N.S – Not Significant

### Data collection and Analysis

The study was conducted after obtaining approval from the Institutional Human Ethical Clearance. After seeking permission from the authority, written informed consent was obtained from all the participants before the data collection. The self administered questionnaire was distributed to all the samples without disturbing their class schedule for 10-15

69.6% had moderate stress, 27.6% had mild stress and only 2.8% were high stressed. As shown in table 2, the mean stress level was found to be 1.58 for the subjects who selected the course with their own choice; the mean score was high, 2.01 for those who were forced by the parents, 1.61 for those who joined by chance and 1.68 for the others. While comparing the mean stress score based on their choice in selection of course, those students who are forced by the parents (2.01) had high

mean score when compared to those who had own choice and by chance which was found to be highly significant  $p < 0.05$  level. Therefore, choice in selection of course of the nursing students was highly associated with level of stress. The LSD Post Hoc test also inferred that the subjects who were forced by their parents to join the nursing course were having high stress than the others who had their own choice and by chance in selection of course to join nursing. Further the ANOVA test revealed that the year of study, place of living, order of birth, family monthly income, and hours spent for studying/day, hours of sleep/ night of students had no significant influence on the level of stress among nursing students.

## DISCUSSION

The present study showed that, 69.6% had moderate stress, 27.6% had mild stress and 2.8% had high stress among the nursing students which were consistent with the findings of studies conducted by Anu Jose M. J. (2016) to assess the level and factors contributing to stress among the nursing students. The results elicited that 68% had moderate stress, 27% had mild stress and only 5% had severe stress (6). Further findings quoted by Sharma, N. and Kaur, A. (2011) revealed that 97% of the subjects had moderate level of stress whereas 3% had severe stress (7) which were also congruent with the findings of the present study. There was a statistically significant association between level of stress and choice in selection of course, especially those who were forced by the parents\* to join nursing when compared to the other of their own choices, Therefore, these nursing students who comes with force need to be counseled to accept nursing as the profession and to love their profession. So that they will be able to come out from their stress. Also, there was no significant association between level of stress and other selected demographic variables. The present study findings correlated with the findings of Liu, M., Wong, T.K.S. et al., (2015) findings which revealed that there was no association between stress with selected demographic variables, except 2<sup>nd</sup> year students' stress scores were significantly lower than those of students in other years (p values were between 0.000 and 0.026) (8). But in the present study there was no significant differences between the 1st and 2nd year students stress score.

## Conclusion

Therefore, stress is common among the nursing students during their course of nursing education. The researcher highlights that an effective intervention strategies involving aerobic exercises, yoga, counseling etc. may be helpful for the nursing students to overcome from their stress during their professional life to make them to be productive and effective. "The key is to find an activity that you enjoy and valuing yourself enough to take the time to engage in that activity," said Mariela Gabaroni, associate director of Student Health Services. "It is all relative to the individual, their time management and the choices they make that can facilitate their learning process."(2)

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