



Stress, Stressors and Coping Among Newly Admitted Nursing Students: A Quantitative Study

Navreet Kaur Saini, Deepika Bajwan and Gurmanpreet Kaur Waraich

Senior Tutor, Ved Nursing College, Prem Institute of Medical Sciences, Panipat, Haryana, India.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 06 September 2017;

Received in revised form:
27 September 2017;

Accepted: 7 October 2017;

Keywords

Stress,
Stressors,
Coping,
Nursing,
Students.

ABSTRACT

A quantitative study to assess level of stress, stressors and coping strategies used by newly admitted nursing students at selected college of Panipat, Haryana. Stress in nursing is inherent and inevitable. Stress inducing demands include long hours of study during examination, lack of free time, frequent change of practice areas, adjustment in hostel, separation from family and friends, financial problems etc. This was a descriptive, cross-sectional study conducted among consecutively sampled 95 newly admitted nursing students at Ved nursing college, Prem institute of medical sciences, Panipat, Haryana. Standardized as well as self-structured, pretested, validated questionnaires were used for data collection. Majority of students (81.1%) were experiencing moderate stress. Most frequently reported stressors were worry about poor grades, parent's expectations, inferiority regarding low performance in studies. Most common healthy coping strategies used were talk to parents, listen to music, share feelings with friends and pray. By identifying the stressors and coping strategies used, effective coping strategies can be reinforced and co-curricular activities can be planned by the institute to minimize the stress of students and to channelize the energy of students in a positive manner.

© 2017 Elixir All rights reserved.

Introduction

Stress is a 20th century disease.¹ It is a universal phenomenon and no human being can be free of stress. It may be defined as psychological perception of pressure, on one hand and the body's response to it. Undoubtedly, the perception of stress varies from person to person depending upon situation or event.² Stress in nursing is inherent and inevitable.³ Exhaustive syllabus, extensive clinical hours, loads of assignments put students under pressure.

Academic stress is emerging as a significant mental health problem in recent years.⁴ Academic performance in turn is influenced by interpersonal, intrapersonal and environmental stressors.⁵ Stress inducing academic demands include long hours of study during examination, lack of free time, frequent change of practice areas and pressure of assignments.² Other stress evoking situations are adjustment in hostel, separation from family and friends, financial problems. Nursing students almost face same academic stressors as other college students, nursing students have an added clinical component which adds on to the stress as they deal with human beings and the procedures done by them can harm the patients, thus instilling and amplifying fear of students.⁶

In order to overcome various stressors, students use coping strategies which can be positive or negative. Soliciting social support, listening to music, sleeping, watching TV, praying, sharing thoughts were reported to be successful coping strategies among students and crying, segregating self, blaming others, engaging in substance abuse were maladaptive coping strategies.⁷

Learning to cope with stress is a useful skill for nursing students, nursing career and the life ahead. By setting priorities, planning ahead, learning coping skills and

organizing self, students can minimize the impact of stress.⁸ Thus the present study was conducted to assess the level of stress, stressors and coping strategies used by the newly admitted basic B.Sc. nursing and GNM (General nursing and midwifery) students at selected college of Panipat, Haryana.

Objectives

1. To assess the level of stress faced by newly admitted students
2. To identify the stressors faced by newly admitted students
3. To assess coping strategies used by newly admitted students

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present descriptive, cross sectional study was conducted at Ved nursing college, Prem institute of Medical Sciences, Panipat in the month of August, 2016 using standardized as well as self structured, pretested, validated questionnaires. The sample size was 95 and consisted of 60 B.Sc nursing 1st year and 35 General nursing and midwifery 1st year students. Consecutive sampling methods was used. The tools used for data collection consisted of perceived stress scale, self structured checklist for assessment of stressors and self structured rating scale for assessment of coping strategies. Perceived stress scale is standardized scale having ten items (six negative and four positive items). Items were scored as; Never = 0, almost never = 1, sometimes = 2, fairly often = 3, very often = 4. Reverse scoring was done for positively worded items. Total score was calculated by adding all ten items for a subject and stress was categorized as: low stress (0-13), moderate stress (14-26), high perceived stress (27- 40). The checklist for assessment of stressors consisted of thirty items under four domains i.e. interpersonal (4 items), intrapersonal (9 items), academic (9 items) and environmental (8 items).

Tele:

E-mail address: saini.reet2@gmail.com

© 2017 Elixir All rights reserved

Rating scale for assessment of coping strategies consisted of twenty four items (13 positive and 11 negative). Items were scored as: never = 0, sometimes = 1, most of the times = 2, always = 3. Reverse scoring was done for negatively worded items. Total coping score was calculated to be 285 and score for individual item was calculated. Tools were validated by five experts from field of nursing. Ethical permission was taken from the ethical committee of the institute. Pilot study was done on five subjects and plan of data collection, data analysis was found to be feasible and workable. Informed consent was taken from the subjects. Questionnaires were given to subjects and were told to read all the tools carefully and give responses accordingly. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 20.

RESULTS

Socio-Demographic Variables

Mean age of subjects was 18.55 years ranging from 17 to 23 years. Out of total students 63.2% were B.Sc Nursing students and 36.8% were GNM (General Nursing and midwifery) students. Majority of students (76.8%) had nuclear family. Most of students (64.2%) were residing in urban locality. Majority of students (76.8%) were living in hostel while 23.2% were residing with their parents.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of socio demographic variables n=95.

S.No	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1	Course		
	• B.sc	60	63.2
	• GNM	35	36.8
2	Type of family		
	• Joint	22	23.2
	• Nuclear	73	76.8
3	Locality		
	• Rural	34	35.8
	• Urban	61	64.2
4	Residence		
	• Living in hostel	73	76.8
	• Living with parents	22	23.2
5	Family income		
	• < Rs5000	08	8.4
	• Rs5001-Rs10000	14	14.87
	• Rs10001-Rs15000	11	11.57
	• Rs15001-Rs20000	17	17.89
	• Rs20001-Rs25000	15	15.7
	• >Rs25000	30	31.57
6	Father's education		
	• Illiterate	09	09.5
	• Primary	04	04.2
	• Secondary	15	15.8
	• Sec. secondary	34	35.8
	• Graduation and above	33	34.7
7	Mother's education		
	• Illiterate	15	15.8
	• Primary	11	11.6
	• Secondary	25	26.3
	• Sen. Secondary	25	26.3
	• Graduate and above	19	20.0
8	Father's occupation		
	• Govt.	29	30.5
	• Private job	22	23.1
	• Self employed	38	40.0
	• unemployed	06	06.4
9	Mother's occupation		
	• Govt.	09	09.5
	• Housewife	74	77.9
	• Private job	07	07.4
	• Self employed	05	05.2

Almost one third of students were having monthly family income > Rs 25,000, one sixth were having family income between Rs 20,000 – 25,000 and rest were having monthly family income ≤ 20,000. Fathers of almost one third of students were graduate and above, other one third of fathers were educated up to senior secondary level. Mothers of almost one fourth of students were educated up to secondary level, one fourth were educated up to senior secondary level. Fathers of most of students (40%) were self employed, 30% were in government job and 6.4% were unemployed. Mothers of majority of students (77.9%) were housewives (Table 1).

Level of stress

Majority of students (81.1%) were experiencing moderate stress, 11.5% were perceiving high stress and 7.4% were experiencing low stress (Table 2).

Table 2. Level of stress n=95.

S.no	Level of stress	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low stress	07	07.4
2	Moderate stress	77	81.1
3	High perceived stress	11	11.5

Identification of Stressors

Interpersonal stressors

Fight with a friend/girl friend/ boy friend was identified to be the most common (65.3%) interpersonal stressor. Lack of close friend (57.9%), lack of cooperation among friends (57.9%) were reported to be the successive stressors. Least reported interpersonal stressor was conflict with room mate (47.4%) (Table 3).

Table 3. Assessment of Stressors n=95.

Stressor	f	%
1. Interpersonal		
a) Fight with a friend/girl friend/boy friend	62	65.3
b) Lack of cooperation from friends	55	57.9
c) Conflict with room mate	45	47.4
d) Lack of close friend	55	57.9
2. Intrapersonal		
a) Change in eating habit	49	51.6
b) Inability to get along with friends	38	40
c) Inferiority regarding low performance in studies	65	68.4
d) Home sickness in hostel	61	64.2
e) Changes in sleeping pattern	59	62.1
f) Financial problem	51	53.7
g) Decline in personal health	61	64.2
h) Change in daily routine	57	60
i) Parents expectations	71	74.7
3. Academic		
a) Less vacation/break	64	67.4
b) Unfamiliar with medical history and terms	37	38.9
c) Unfamiliar with professional nursing skills	40	42.1
d) Unfamiliar with patient's diagnosis and treatment	45	47.4
e) Worry about poor grades	81	85.3
f) Pressure from clinical practice and assignments	58	61.1
g) Stress from teaching and nursing staff	45	47.4
h) Overburden with study	64	67.4
i) Difficult to understand language used by teachers	23	24.2
4. Environmental		
a) Non adjustment in hostel	51	53.7
b) Problem with mess food	58	61.1
c) Poorly ventilated classrooms	54	56.8
d) Inadequate facility of canteen/mess	53	55.8
e) Lack of recreation facility	50	52.6
f) Absence of calm and quiet environment	63	66.3
g) Inadequate supply of electricity	60	63.2
h) Inadequate supply of water	51	53.7

Intrapersonal stressors

Parents expectations was reported to be the most common intrapersonal stressor (74.7%). Second most common stressor identified was inferiority regarding low

performance in studies (68.4%). Home sickness in hostel (64.2%) and decline in personal health (64.2%) were subsequent stressors identified. Following these were changes in sleeping pattern (62.1%), change in daily routine (60%), financial problem (53.7%), change in eating habits (51.6%) and inability to go along with friends (40%) (Table 3).

Academic stressors

Most common academic stressor identified was worry about poor grades (85.3%) followed by less vacation/ break (67.4%) and overburden with study (67.4%). Pressure from clinical experience and assignments (61.1%) was successive identified stressor, followed by unfamiliar with patient's diagnosis and treatment (47.4%), stress from teaching and nursing staff (47.4%). Subsequent stressors were unfamiliar with professional nursing skills (42.1%), unfamiliar with medical history and terms (38.9%) and difficult to understand language used by teachers (24.2%) (Table 3).

Environmental stressors

Among environmental stressors absence of calm and quiet environment (66.3%) was identified to be the most common stressor followed by inadequate supply of electricity (63.2%), problem with mess food (61.1%), poorly ventilated classrooms (56.8%), inadequate facility of canteen/mess (55.8%). Least reported stressors were non adjustment in hotel (53.7%), inadequate supply of water (53.7%) and lack of recreation facility (52.6%) (Table 3).

Coping Strategies

First five ranking items of positive coping strategies depending upon their extent of use were: talk to parents (207), listen to music (171), share feelings with friends (159), meditation/pray (157), devote more time to study (136) (Table 4). On the contrary items like blame self that 'I deserve it' (163), isolate self (139), believe in supernatural power (138), eat less (135), cry (107) were the most common negative coping strategies used by students (Table 5).

DISCUSSION

Majority of students (77%) experienced moderate stress in the present study. Similar findings were shown by Labrague et al⁹ where all students experienced moderate level of stress.

In the present study most frequently reported stressors were worry about poor grades, parents expectations, inferiority regarding low performance in studies, less vacation/ break, overburden with study. Comparable results were shown by AMostafa Amr et al¹⁰ where most common stressors reported were; fear of future, self-reported anxiety and depression, increased class workload, accommodation problems and congested classrooms.

Study revealed that students tend to use more positive and healthy coping strategies. Most common healthy coping strategies used were talk to parents, listen to music, share feelings with friends and pray. Findings were in line with the study done by Roseline Dhar et al³ where most common used healthy coping strategies were positive thinking, listening to radio music, talk to parents and pray more.

In the present era stress has become an inescapable condition. In such environment, a student nurse is bound to experience stress as she has to accommodate herself to a totally changed environment. Stress doesn't only bring troubles but along with it, brings ways how to handle it. It promotes personal growth and self-improvement. Eustress is very essential for student nurses. Students gain knowledge and incorporate new skills only when they are faced in a particular situation.

Students must know the ways to manage their stress as only then, they can be a helping hand to the patients who are under extreme stress and emotional turmoil. By identifying the stressors and coping strategies used, effective coping strategies can be reinforced and co-curricular activities can be planned by the institute like educational trips, sports day, yoga and meditation classes,¹¹ cultural festivals to minimize

Table 4. Positive Coping Strategies n = 95.

Total Score = 285

S.No	Items	Never	Sometimes	Most of the times	Always	Total
1	Talk to parents	5	26	37	27	207
2	Share feeling with friends	12	29	32	22	159
3	Meditation/pray	13	36	17	29	157
4	Listen to music	6	32	32	25	171
5	Watch TV	38	46	9	2	70
6	Discuss problem with teacher	39	44	9	3	71
7	Busy with creative activities	28	39	19	9	95
8	Be with boyfriend and girl friend	74	11	6	4	35
9	Read novels/ magazine	39	49	6	1	64
10	Hangouts with friends	23	47	15	10	107
11	Joke about the problem	41	32	12	10	86
12	Put problem aside and participate in other activities	22	41	25	7	112
13	Devote more time to study	14	35	37	9	136

Table 5. Negative Coping Strategies n = 95.

Total Score = 285

S.No	Items	Never	Sometimes	Most of the times	Always	Total
1	Cry	16	55	20	4	107
2	Spend more times with mobile phone	22	52	16	5	99
3	Sleep more	38	31	19	7	90
4	Sleep less	29	34	24	8	106
5	Use drugs (alcohol/smoking)	86	7	0	2	13
6	Blame others	60	28	6	1	43
7	Blame self that 'I deserve it'	9	34	27	25	163
8	Isolate self	17	37	21	20	139
9	Believe in supernatural power	20	33	21	21	138
10	Eat less	16	39	24	16	135
11	Eat more	45	36	8	6	70

the stress of students and to channelize the energy of students in a positive manner.

Conflict of interest- None

Source of Funding - Self

Ethical clearance – Obtained

REFERENCES

¹ Stress | Psychology Today [Internet]. [cited 2017 Jan 12]. Available from:

² Ghai S, Dutta M, Garg A. Perceived Level of Stress, Stressors and Coping Behaviours in Nursing Students. *Indian Journal of Positive Psychology*. 2014 Mar 1;5(1):60.

³ Roselin Dhar, Indarjit Walia, Karobi Das. A descriptive study to assess the causes of stress and coping strategies used by the newly admitted basic B.Sc. Nursing students. *Nursing and Midwifery Research Journal*. 2009 January 31-37(1):5

⁴ Singh C, Sharma S, Sharma RK. Level of stress and coping strategies used by nursing interns. *Nursing and Midwifery Research Journal*, 7 (4): 152. 2011 Oct;160.

⁵ Kirkland MLS. Stressors and Coping Strategies Among Successful Female African American Baccalaureate Nursing Students. *J Nurs Educ*. 1998 Jan 1;37(1):5–9.

⁶ Seyedfatemi N, Tafreshi M, Hagani H. Experienced stressors and coping strategies among Iranian nursing students. *BMC nursing*. 2007 Nov 13;6(1):11.

⁷ Kaur S, Das K, Amrinder N, Kanika S, Meena P, Gagandeep I, Arash R. Stress and coping in the nursing students. *J Ment Health Hum Behav*. 2009;14(1):51-6.

⁸ Pitts Patty. Research helps nursing Students reduces Stress levels. The Ring, The University of Victoria's Community Newspaper, 2000; 14: 2-3. Available from <http://jringuvicj00july14jyoung.html>

⁹ Labrague LJ. Stress, stressors, and stress responses of student nurses in a government Nursing school.

¹⁰ Amr A, El-Gilany AH, El-Moafee H, Salama L, Jimenez C. Stress among Mansoura (Egypt) baccalaureate nursing students. *Pan African Medical Journal*. 2011;8(1).

¹¹ Oman D, Shapiro SL, Thoresen CE, Plante TG, Flinders T. Meditation lowers stress and supports forgiveness among college students: A randomized controlled trial. *Journal of American College Health*. 2008 Mar 1;56(5):569-78.