

ORIGINAL PAPER

Factors Associated with Stress Among B.Sc. Nursing Students

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ABSTRACT

Stress is a universal phenomenon and an unavoidable part of human life. In professional courses like nursing, initial period of course is stressful and it adversely affects the emotional, physical, social, and academic functions of the student nurses. A descriptive study was conducted among all the B. Sc. Nursing students studying in B. Sc. Nursing College Dibrugarh to find the level of stress and the factors associated with stress among them and it was found that majority of 85% students had above normal stress, 13% had normal stress and 2% had severe stress. Among the factors contributing to stress, the academic factors had maximum contribution (40%), followed by intrapersonal factors (30%). The environmental factor had only 21% contribution whereas the interpersonal factors contributed minimally (9%). Stress has become a chronic and pervasive condition in the world today. Every person experience different forms of stress throughout their life, therefore a student nurse is no exception as she has to adjust to an entirely new environment on joining the course in nursing. Certainly stress in the college setting cannot be eliminated, but preparing the student nurses to manage it properly can do a better task.

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INTRODUCTION

Stress is a universal phenomenon and an unavoidable part of human life. It is the emotional and physical strain caused by our responses to pressure from the outside world¹. It is specific response by the body to a stimulus that disturbs normal functioning. A stressor is an event or any stimulus that cause an individual to experience stress.² Stress results from the interaction between stressor and the individual's perception and reaction to the stressors.^{3,4}

In professional courses like nursing, initial period of course is stressful and it adversely affects the emotional, physical, social, and academic functions of the student nurses. Entering the world of nursing presents the new students with a formidable array of changes. Often still in their teens they are often asked to transform from adolescent to adult and from lay person to professional.^{5,6} Many of the nursing students move away from home for the first time, which can necessitate leaving all previously learned support system such as parents, siblings and high school friends. Students may need to develop entirely new social contacts and are expected to take responsibility for their own needs. They may have difficulty in adjusting to more rigorous academic expectations and the need to learn to deal with individuals of different culture and belief. Thus stress may result from being separated from home for the first time, the transition from personal to impersonal academics and the vary structure of academic experience at the college level.

Even though the perception and response to stress and way of coping differs individually, it may produce questionable behavioral patterns in student nurses during the course of their study like feeling of loneliness,

nervousness, sleeplessness, and worrying. Thus, the student nurse faces a lot of challenges and problems during their study life.^{7, 8, 9}

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 inappropriate patient care and may more. Identifying factors affecting stress among nursing students can help nursing educators to find ways to decrease stress.^{10,11}

Based on the personal life experiences, ground full evidences, the researcher took interest in exploring the level of stress and the factors associated with stress of B. Sc. nursing students. Here, the researcher tries to help student nurses to better understand about the phenomena of stress and its associated factors.

METHODS

A descriptive survey design was used for the study. The study was conducted at B. Sc. Nursing College Dibrugarh during the month of August 2015. The target population consisted of all the B. Sc. nursing students presently studying in B. Sc. nursing College Dibrugarh. Study sample comprised of 175 nursing students. The purpose of the study was explained to the subjects and verbal consent was sought from them. Data was collected by using standardized tool to assess level of stress and self-administered questionnaire to find out the factors associated with stress. It was consisted of demographic profile and checklist of the factors associated with stress in four areas namely academic, environmental, interpersonal and intrapersonal.

A numerical rating scale from 1-3 scores in which score 1 indicates never, score 2 indicates sometimes and score 3 indicates often and under 15=normal, 15-25=above normal and 26-30=severe stress. This stress assessment tool by United Nations Stress Management Booklet was used to assess the level of stress experienced by the subjects regarding different life events.

The content validity and reliability, suggestions were received from five experts in the field of psychology and psychiatric nursing. The data was analyzed as per the objectives using descriptive and inferential statistics.

OBSERVATION AND RESULTS

The study found that out of the 175 students, majority (57%) of nursing students were more than 20 years of age, 38% were 19-20 years and 5% were 17-18 years. Majority (91%) of the nursing students were from nuclear

family, 6% from joint family and 3% from extended family. It was observed that majority (97%) stays in hostel, 2.4% in own home and 0.6% stays in rented house. It was further found that majority of (35%) students are from lower middle class family, 28% from upper middle class, 21% from upper class, 13% from upper lower class and 5% students belong to lower class family.

Stress level among B. Sc. Nursing Students

The nursing students stress was measured by using stress assessment tool by United Nations Stress Management Booklet and it was found that majority of (85%) students had above normal stress, 13% had normal stress and 2% had severe stress (**Table1**).

Table 1 Stress level among B. Sc. Nursing Students n=175

Level of stress	f	%
Normal stress	22	13
Above normal stress	149	85
Severe stress	4	2

Factors associated with stress

From **Table 2** it is found that majority (61%) students were over burdened with study and assignment and 51% of lower grade than anticipation. 50% was overloaded with practical work, 42% had poor satisfaction with class room performance, 41% had less vacation/ break, inability to concentrate on study and inability to balance study and leisure time, less than 35% had stress related with Inability to enjoy study, poor interest in studies, poor IPR with teachers, serious argument with teachers, Missing too many classes and language problem.

Table 2 Academic factors associated with stress

Academic Factors	No of students perceived stress due to given factor (n)%
Less vacation/ break	71(41)
Inability to balance study and leisure time	71(41)
Over burden with study and assignment	107(61)
Inability to concentrate on study	85(41)
Poor satisfaction with class room performance	74(42)
Getting lower grade than anticipation	90(51)
Inability to enjoy study	56(32)
Poor interest in studies	50(29)
Poor IPR with teachers	57(33)
Serious argument with teachers	28(16)
Overload with practical work	87(50)
Missing too many classes	19(11)
Language problem	34(19)

From **Table 3**, it was found that related to the environmental factors majority (53%) had stress related to inadequate facility of canteen, 45% had stress related to lack of recreational facility, 35% had stress related to lack of laundry facility, 23% had stress related to absence of calm and quite environment, 20% had stress related to inadequate water facility and less than 20% had stress related to change in living environment, inadequate telephone facility, inadequate provision of safety and security, extreme climate factors and inadequate supply of electricity.

Table 3 Environmental factors associated with stress

Environmental factors	No of students perceived stress due to given factor (n)%
Change in living environment	28(16)
Inadequate telephone facility	11(6)
Inadequate provision of safety and security	29(17)
Inadequate facility of canteen	92(53)
Lack of recreational facility	79(45)
Lack of laundry facility	62(35)
Absence of calm and quite environment	41(23)
Extreme climate factors	37(21)
Inadequate supply of electricity	16(9)
Inadequate water facility	35(20)

From **Table 4**, it was found that among the interpersonal factors, out of 175 students, majority (22%) had stress related to fight with close ones, 21% had stress related to lack of close and intimate friend, 16% had stress related to conflict with roommate, 15% had lack of co-operation from friends and 10% had stress related to change in social activities.

Table 4 Interpersonal factors associated with stress

Interpersonal factors	No of students perceived stress due to given factor (n)%
Change in social activities	18(10)
Fight with close ones	38(22)
Lack of co-operation from friends	26(15)
Lack of close and intimate friend	37(21)
Conflict with room mate	28(16)

From **Table 5**, it was found that among the intrapersonal factors, majority (59%) had stress related to getting less than parents expectation, 55% had new responsibilities

of life, 46% had change in sleeping pattern, 44% had stress related to change in eating pattern, 38% had homesickness in hostel, 40% had stress related to financial problem, 36% had stress related to decline in personal health, 22% had stress related to death of significant one and 7% had stress related to engagement/ marriage.

Table 5 Intrapersonal factors associated with stress

Intrapersonal factors	No of students perceived stress due to given factor (n)%
Change in eating pattern	77 (44)
Engagement/marriage	13(7)
Homesickness in hostel	66(38)
Change in sleeping pattern	80(46)
New responsibilities of life	96(55)
Getting less than Parents expectation	103(59)
Decline in personal health	63(36)
Death of significant one	38(22)
Financial problem	70(40)
Change in religious belief	21(12)

DISCUSSION

Stress is an organism's response to a stressor such an environmental condition or a stimulus. Stress is a body's method of reacting to a challenge. Stress is only harmful when it is excessive.¹² Much of the stress that all people experience from their life experience is helpful and stimulating. But stress if cannot managed properly lead to psychological distress, physical complaints, behavioral problems and poor academic performance.¹³

The present study was conducted to assess the level of stress and the factors associated with stress among the B.Sc. Nursing students presently studying in B. Sc. Nursing College Dibrugarh. The findings of the study revealed that out of 175 students (57%) of nursing students were more than 20 years of age, (91%) of the nursing students were from nuclear family, (97%) stays in hostel and (35%) students are from lower middle class family.

The findings of the study also revealed that (85%) students experienced above normal stress, 13% experienced normal stress and 2% experienced severe stress which was slightly consistent with the study conducted in a private nursing institute of Punjab to assess stress level and

coping strategies among nursing students and found that 34% students had moderate stress, 33% were having mild and severe stress respectively.¹⁴

The result of the present study identified various factors like academic factor (40%), environmental factor (21%), interpersonal factor (9%) and intrapersonal factors (30%) contributing to stress among nursing students. This study is contrast with the study conducted on GNM students on a nursing institute of Faridkot revealed that environmental factor had maximum contribution (40%), followed by the interpersonal factor (30%), the academic factors had only 19% contribution whereas the interpersonal factors contributed minimally.¹⁵

In the present study, among the academic factors 61% students were over burdened with study and assignment and 51% got lower grade than anticipation, 50% were overloaded with practical work and 33% had poor IPR with teachers. Similar factors were identified in another study where source of stress included excessive homework and overload with assignment.¹⁶ Poor IPR with teachers and arguments with teachers were also identified as stressors in another study by Sgan-Cohen and Lowental.¹⁷

From the environmental factors reported by most of the students as stressor, 53% had stress related to inadequate facility of canteen, 45% had stress related to lack of recreational facility.

Regarding the interpersonal factors it was found that out of 175 student 22% had stress related to fight with close ones, 21% had stress related to lack of close and intimate friend and 16% had stress related to conflict with roommate. This study is consistent with the study conducted at Baccalaureate Saudi Nursing Students and found that 26% students had stress related to conflict with roommate and 29% had stress related to fight with close ones.¹⁸

Among the intrapersonal factors it was observed that 59% had stress related to getting less than parents expectation, 40% had stress related to financial problems, 36% had stress related to decline in personal health. This study is too some extent similar with the study conducted at the college of nursing, Ireland on 70 students which showed that financial issues and poor personal health were perceived as major stressor among the nursing students.¹⁹

CONCLUSION

Stress has become a chronic and pervasive condition in the world today. Present era is marked as an era of stress. Every person experience different forms of stress throughout their life, therefore a student nurse is no exception as she has to adjust to an entirely new environment on joining the course in nursing. Certainly stress in the college setting cannot be eliminated, but preparing the student nurses to manage it properly can do a better task.

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