

Assessment Of Stress Among Nursing Students: A Cross-Sectional Study

Mr. Muthu Kumaran. T^{1*}, Dr. Rajalakshmi. S², Mrs. Usha. S³, Mrs. Sathiya Bama. P⁴

^{1*}Ph.D Scholar, Bharath Institute of Higher Education And Research

²Guide, Bharath Institute of Higher Education And Research

³Ph.D Scholar, Bharath Institute of Higher Education And Research

⁴Ph.D Scholar, Bharath Institute of Higher Education And Research

ABSTRACT

Stress is a prevalent issue among nursing students, arising from the demands of academic and clinical responsibilities. This cross-sectional study, using a quantitative research approach, aimed to assess the levels of stress among nursing students at a nursing college. A total of 120 students were selected through convenient sampling. Data were collected using a standardized stress assessment tool. The findings revealed that 50% of the students experienced normal stress levels, while 9.2% reported mild stress, 19.7% moderate stress, 14.5% severe stress, and 6.6% extremely severe stress. These results highlight the need for effective stress management interventions to improve the mental health and well-being of nursing students.

INTRODUCTION

Stress is a significant concern among nursing students, as it can affect their academic performance, clinical skills, and overall well-being. Nursing education is demanding, requiring students to balance rigorous coursework with clinical training and personal commitments. The stress experienced by nursing students often stems from factors such as academic pressure, long hours of clinical practice, fear of making mistakes, and limited time for self-care.

High levels of stress can lead to physical, emotional, and psychological health issues, ultimately impacting students' learning experiences and their ability to provide quality patient care. Identifying stress levels among nursing students is essential to developing targeted strategies for stress management and improving their academic and clinical performance.

This study aims to assess the levels of stress among nursing students in a college setting and identify the proportion of students experiencing varying degrees of stress. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights into the prevalence of stress and inform the development of effective interventions to support nursing students.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach:

This study employed a **quantitative research approach** to measure the levels of stress among nursing students.

Research Design:

A **cross-sectional study design** was used to assess stress levels at a specific point in time.

Setting:

The study was conducted at a **nursing college**, providing a controlled environment to gather relevant data from nursing students.

Population:

The target population for this study included all nursing students enrolled in the nursing college.

Sample Size:

A total of **120 nursing students** participated in the study.

Sampling Technique:

Convenient sampling was used to select the participants, ensuring ease of access while maintaining a diverse representation of students.

Data Collection Tool:

A **standardized stress assessment questionnaire** was used to evaluate the levels of stress. The tool categorized stress into five levels:

1. Normal
2. Mild
3. Moderate
4. Severe
5. Extremely Severe

Data Collection Procedure:

Students were informed about the study's purpose and provided consent before participation. They were asked to complete the questionnaire, which was designed to capture their self-reported stress levels.

Ethical Considerations:

- Ethical approval was obtained from the institutional review board.
- Written informed consent was obtained from all participants.
- Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were ensured throughout the study.

Data Analysis:

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Stress levels were represented as percentages and visualized using bar graphs for better interpretation.

RESULTS

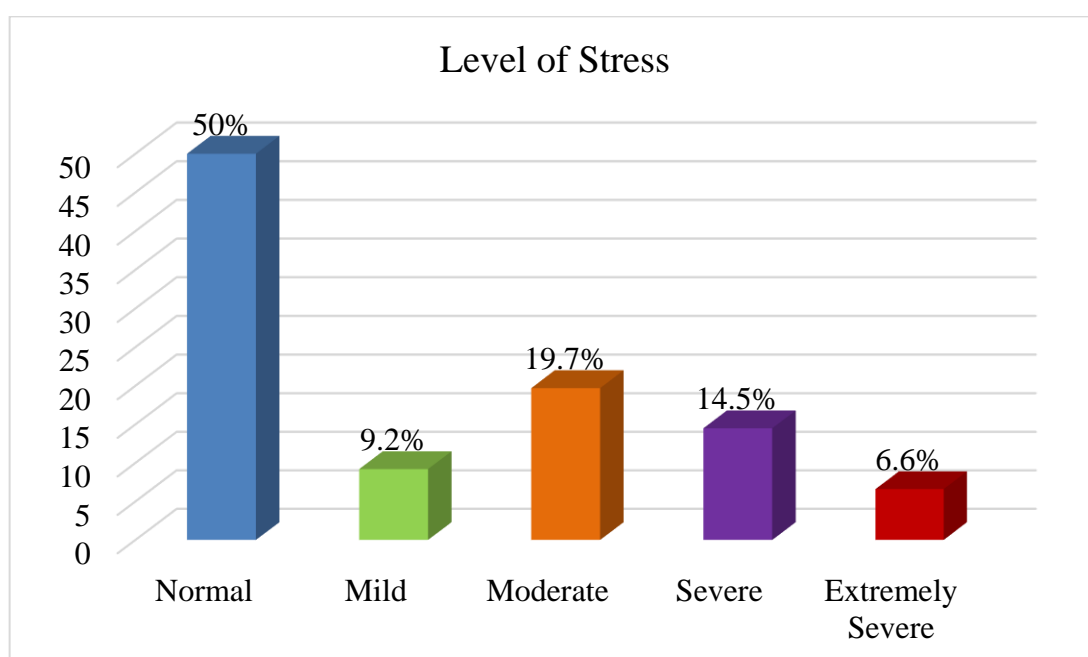


Fig. 1: Distribution of Level of Stress among Nursing Students

Distribution of Stress Levels:

- **Normal Stress:**
50% (60 students) experienced normal stress levels, indicating that half of the participants were coping well with their academic and clinical demands.
- **Mild Stress:**
9.2% (11 students) reported mild stress, suggesting early signs of stress but manageable at this stage.
- **Moderate Stress:**
19.7% (24 students) experienced moderate stress. These students likely faced challenges balancing academic pressures and personal responsibilities.
- **Severe Stress:**
14.5% (17 students) had severe stress levels, highlighting the need for immediate interventions to prevent further escalation.
- **Extremely Severe Stress:**
6.6% (8 students) reported extremely severe stress, a critical finding indicating potential risks to their mental and physical health.

Analysis of Moderate to Extremely Severe Stress Levels (Combined 40.8%):

Nearly 41% of students fell into the moderate-to-extremely severe stress categories. These students are at higher risk of experiencing academic burnout, reduced clinical efficiency, and potential health issues.

Key Contributing Factors (Hypothesized):

- Academic pressure from exams, assignments, and clinical skill assessments.
- Emotional stress due to patient care responsibilities.
- Time constraints leading to insufficient rest and self-care.

Bar Graph Interpretation:

The bar graph visually depicts the stress distribution among nursing students:

- The tallest bar represents 50% of students with normal stress levels, signifying good resilience among half of the participants.
- The smaller bars for severe (14.5%) and extremely severe stress (6.6%) raise concerns about the mental well-being of a significant minority of students.

Implications of Findings:

- The high percentage of students experiencing moderate to severe stress emphasizes the need for stress management programs.
- Students in the extremely severe stress category require immediate counseling and support.
- The findings suggest that nursing colleges should implement periodic stress evaluations to monitor students' mental health.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal significant insights into the stress levels among nursing students. Stress, often considered an inevitable aspect of nursing education, affects students differently depending on their academic year, workload, and personal coping mechanisms. In this study, while 50% of students reported normal stress levels, the remaining half exhibited varying degrees of stress, ranging from mild to extremely severe.

The high percentage of students experiencing moderate (19.7%), severe (14.5%), and extremely severe stress (6.6%) raises concerns about their ability to balance academic and clinical demands. These stress levels may stem from factors such as academic pressure, emotional challenges in clinical practice, fear of failure, and limited time for relaxation and self-care.

Similar findings have been reported in previous studies, where nursing students often experience stress related to their dual responsibilities of academics and patient care. Persistent stress, if left unaddressed, can lead to burnout, anxiety, depression, and decreased academic performance, ultimately affecting the quality of nursing care they provide.

To address this issue, nursing colleges must incorporate stress management strategies such as relaxation techniques, peer support systems, time management training, and accessible mental health counseling services. Faculty members should also consider fostering a supportive environment and reducing unnecessary stressors within the curriculum.

SUMMARY

This study aimed to assess stress levels among nursing students using a cross-sectional design and a quantitative research approach. A sample of 120 nursing students participated, and the results revealed the following:

- **50%** of students experienced normal stress levels.
- **9.2%** reported mild stress, which is manageable with proper guidance.
- **19.7%** experienced moderate stress, requiring interventions to prevent escalation.
- **14.5%** reported severe stress, indicating significant challenges in coping.
- **6.6%** experienced extremely severe stress, a critical finding requiring immediate action.

These findings highlight that while half of the students maintain normal stress levels, a significant proportion experience moderate to severe stress, necessitating institutional and individual interventions to support their mental health and well-being.

CONCLUSION

Stress is a prevalent issue among nursing students, with nearly 41% of students in this study experiencing moderate to extremely severe stress levels. While many students are resilient, those with higher stress levels are at risk of adverse physical, emotional, and academic outcomes.

The findings underscore the importance of implementing stress management programs and providing adequate support systems within nursing colleges. Regular assessments, mental health counseling, and strategies to reduce academic pressure can improve students' ability to manage stress, enhancing their academic success and clinical competence.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Integrate regular stress assessments into the academic calendar to identify and address stress levels early.
 2. Offer workshops on stress management techniques, such as mindfulness, yoga, and time management.
 3. Provide accessible mental health resources, including counseling and peer support groups.
 4. Encourage a collaborative learning environment where students feel supported by faculty and peers.
 5. Balance academic rigor with adequate breaks and recreational activities to promote well-being.
- By prioritizing the mental health of nursing students, institutions can ensure they are well-prepared for the challenges of their profession.

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