



## Occupational stress and its management among nursing professionals in Kottayam district

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### Abstract

Stress is a common phenomenon that is present with every work. Each work has some stressors which lead to stress. In the current context of Covid-19 pandemic, Health care workers experience huge level of stress, especially nursing professionals is a group which experienced a huge level of stress in their professional life. In this study, we try to find answers to different questions that are related to Occupational Stress among nursing professionals by collecting the required data from 100 Nursing professionals working in various hospitals in Kottayam municipality using a self-made questionnaire.

**Keywords:** stress, stressors, stress management, occupational stress

### Introduction

Stress is a feeling of emotional or physical tension. It can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, or nervous. Stress is your body's reaction to a challenge or demand. When it comes to occupational stress, it can lead to one's physical or mental state in response to a workplace that poses a challenge to that employee. Every profession has its own stress but, in this study, we focus on, work stress of nursing professionals and its management. Nursing is an incredibly stressful career. Sources of stress can be the patient and cases they observe, time constraints to get work done, conflicts with leadership or co-workers, or a feeling of lack of control in their work environment. Stress can lead to fatigue, exhaustion, and detachment from their work which may lead to patient safety concerns. Occupational stress will result in decreasing efficiency and increasing occupational hazards inside and outside the work environment <sup>[1]</sup>. Cole and Nelson reported that 93% of the nurses were frequently under the influence of stress factors in their workplace <sup>[2]</sup>. Therefore, successful management of stress is always essential for the well-being of not only the nurse but patients as well. So always it is questions that how do nurses manage high levels of stress and the accompanying emotions? So, in this study, we try to get answers to different questions related to stress management among nursing professionals.

### Statement of the Problem

This study focusses on addressing different questions related to occupational stress and its management among nursing staff. The research problem here is to study various causes and kinds of occupational Stress experienced by nurses at work, various strategies followed by nursing staffs to overcome occupational stress, association between socio-demographic characteristics and type of stress experienced by nursing staff etc. This study is conducted among nursing professionals in various hospitals in Kottayam municipality.

### Relevance of the Study

Nursing is a profession that has a great effect on public health, but it is always a profession that has great stress due

to various reasons such as the long working hours, greater responsibilities, health risks associated with the profession etc. Dehghan-Nayeri *et al.* has also reported that factors such as shortage of nurses, lots of miscellaneous workloads, mismanagement, discrimination, poor relations, and profit-seeking enterprise put the nurses under pressure and reduce their productivity and efficiency <sup>[3]</sup>. In the present scenario of Covid-19 pandemic nursing professionals are the group which plays the vital role of taking care of Covid-19 Positive patients, this is a very risky job and these responsibilities are beautifully taken care of by them, but it's a very stressful situation due to various reasons such as the long working hours, difficulties in using personal protection equipment, difficulties in managing their families etc. which may lead to behavioral, physical and psychological strains. Adverse health effects include psychological disorders. This may lead to poor work performance, higher absenteeism, less work productivity even injury. Stress also cause cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hypertension, weak immune system, increased risk of occupational immune and health service utilization. This study, therefore, helps us in addressing the different issues related to stress and its management within nursing professionals which in turn helps nursing professionals to manage their stress more effectively and efficiently.

### Objectives

1. To ascertain the various causes and kinds of occupational Stress experienced by nurses at work
2. To identify the various strategies followed by nursing staffs to overcome occupational stress
3. To identify the association between socio-demographic characteristics and type of stress experienced by nursing staffs

### Methodology

This study was quantitative in nature with a sample size of 100. This study followed convenience sampling and the samples were selected from the Nurses working in various hospitals in Kottayam Municipality. Self-made questionnaire was used for taking the socio-demographic

profile of the respondents. Tables, graphs, and percentage analysis were used for the analysis of collected data. This study was done with 100 respondents and 50% of the respondents were male and the rest 50% were female. 50% of the respondents belong to the age group Below 25 years and the rest 50% were of the age group 25 – 35 years. 80% of the respondents were single and 20% were married.

### Findings

- Most of the respondents (70 percent) are of the opinion that the salary paid to them is Not Enough and rest of the respondents (30 percent) are of the opinion that the salary paid to them is Enough for them for the work they do
- The leading part of the respondents was of the view that they experience Physical stress during their work, followed by Thirty-five percent with the opinion that they experience psychological stress and rest with the opinion that they experience Behavioral stress during their work
- Most of the respondents (60 percent) opined that the working environment provided to them are satisfactory and rest were of the opinion that it is not satisfactory
- Most of the respondents were of the view that Hospital Managements used to organize various stress management programs in order to overcome stress. Followed by 30 percent with the opinion That Hospital Managements used to Redesign job and improve working conditions in order to overcome stress followed by 20 percent with the view that Hospital Managements most of helped to overcome stress by encouraging open channels of communication and 15 percent with the opinion that Hospital Management helped in overcoming stress by Making the role clear, so as to reduce role ambiguity
- Majority of the respondents (30 percent) have a neutral opinion that, poor attitude of doctors is the major cause of stress followed by 20 percent each with the opinion Strongly Agree, Agree and Disagree and the remaining 10 percent is of the opinion that they strongly disagree
- Majority of the respondents (60 percent) strongly agree that posting in a busy department is a major cause of stress followed by 20 percent with the opinion agree and rest 20 percent has a neutral opinion on it
- Majority of the respondents (60 percent) Strongly agree that Inadequate pay is a major cause of stress, 30 percent of the respondents Disagree that Inadequate pay is a major factor leading to stress and rest, 10 percent of the respondents agree that inadequate pay leads to stress
- Majority of the respondents (80 percent) Strongly agree that time pressure is a major cause of occupational stress and rest 20 percent of the respondents agree that time pressure is a major cause of occupational stress
- Majority of the respondents (50 percent) strongly agree that exposure to infectious diseases is a major cause leading to occupational stress followed by 30 percent of the respondents with a neutral opinion and the rest of the respondents Agree that exposure to infectious diseases is a major cause leading to occupational stress
- Majority of the respondents (60 Percent) strongly agree that inadequate staffing level is a major cause of occupational stress, 20 percent agree that inadequate staffing level is the major cause of occupational stress and rest 20 percent have a Neutral opinion on it

- Leading part of the respondents (55 percent) was of the opinion that Occupational stress results in lack of concern for organization and colleagues, Followed by 25 percent of the respondents with the opinion that occupational stress results in reduced efficiency. 15 percent with the opinion that Occupational stress results in increased rigidity of thoughts and rests 5 percent opined that occupational stress results in loss of responsibility and loyalty to an organization
- Majority of the respondents (35 percent) were of the opinion that they overcome their stress by Managing their time better, followed by 25 percent of the respondents with the opinion that, they identify the source of stress and avoid unnecessary stress followed by 15 percent each with the opinion that they Resort to their hobbies and they adjust their standards and attitudes and 10 percent with the opinion that they express their feelings instead of bottling them up.

### Conclusion

Stress and stress management can be said as the two sides of the same coin. From this study, it is evident that nursing professionals are a group that always experience stress due to various stressors related to their profession such as the poor attitude of doctors, inadequate pay, posting in busy departments, etc. They overcome those stress using various stress management techniques such as managing their time in a better way, identifying the stressors and avoiding them, expressing their feelings without bottling them up, etc. It was also identified that majority of the people experience physical stress as the result of stress. Therefore, hospital management should help their nurses in stress management by taking new stress management initiatives and by identifying and eliminating the major stressors that affect their nursing staff.

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