

# A Descriptive Study to Assess the Causes of Stress and Coping Strategies used by the Newly Admitted Basic B. Sc. Nursing Students

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**Abstract:** A descriptive study was conducted in nursing college jammu to assess the causes of stress and the ways of coping with stress. Total Forty Three Basic B. Sc Nursing 1st year students were selected purposely for collection of data. The questionnaire consisted of two parts of checklist, 1st part is for causes of stress and 2nd part is the coping strategies. Result revealed that 21 (48.83%) students were having the mild stress and 5 (11.62%) were having moderate stress. Academic stress ranked highest among the stresses perceived by the nursing students. Factors of little concern were financial area which was perceived as least stressful. Most of the nursing students, perceived "difficulty in participation in social life because of long college hours," as most stressful followed by "shortage of time for self study" and "problems in getting log book completed." Majority of the subject tend to use more of healthy coping strategies as compared to negative or unhealthy ones. "Positive thinking" and listening to music/radio were used frequently.

**Keywords:** Stress, coping strategies, newly admitted nursing students

## 1. Introduction

From the large number of stresses faced by a adolescents and young adults, academic stress, emerges as significant mental health problem in recent years. It has been estimated that 10% to 30% students experience academic related stress that affects their academic performance. Information load, high expectations, academic burden or pressure, unrealistic ambitions, limited opportunities, high competitiveness are some of the sources of stress which create tension, fear and anxiety.

Professional preparation of a nurse in the institute of Nursing, is largely determined by her initial adjustment and ability to cope with changes, necessary during her academic preparation. If she can take care of herself, then she will be able to take care of the clients.<sup>2</sup> 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.

Nursing school is very, stressful, students experience increase tension prior to their clinical rotations or their written examinations, especially their finals. Nursing school is very demanding with its paperwork and skill performance. Academic sources of stress include long hours of study during examination assignments and grades, lack of free time, and lack of timely feedback.

Clinical sources of stress include working with dying patients, interpersonal conflict with other nurses, insecurity about personal clinical competence, fear of failure, interpersonal problems with patients work overload and concerns about nursing care given to patients. Learning psychomotor skills, e. g. administering injections and performing female catheterization have been associated with

high levels of anxiety and a perceived lack of practical skills is a common Worry for many students.

The setting in which student nurses are placed may also have an impact on affective well - being Initial ward placements produce greater anxiety for students than for any other period in the early part of training changes in ward allocation have also been shown to be a source of stress for student nurse. Therefore nursing students need to assess their stress levels and determine what will decrease their tension.

Nursing education is demanding and can be especially stressful during exams, assignment submissions and assessment deadlines around placement schedule and when dealing with difficult or needy people. Other ways of coping with stress might sound like they waste time but they increase ability to think and to concentrate exercise, eating a balanced diet, getting plenty of sleep and spending quality time with friends and family are necessary ingredients for managing stress. Learning to cope with stress is a useful skill for a nursing career and life ahead. By setting priorities, planning ahead and by organizing, self, one can minimize the impact of stress.<sup>10</sup> Thus the present study was conducted to assess the causes of stress and coping strategies used by the newly admitted basic B. Sc. nursing students.

### Objectives

- To identify the causes of stress faced by newly admitted nursing
- To assess the coping strategies adopted by them in response to the stress they

## 2. Materials and Methods

The study was conducted at the nursing college jammu during the month of January. This Institute is affiliated with jammu University. The target population consisted of all the

B. Sc. Nursing first year students. Study sample comprised of 43 nursing students.

Data was collected after seeking permission from the principal, of nursing college and the class coordinator was contacted to fix up the time for data collection. The purpose of the study was explained to the subject and verbal consent was sought from them. Data was collected by using the self administered questionnaire. It was comprised of socio - demographic profile, and checklist of the causes of stress of four areas, (academic, personal, psychosocial, financial) and coping strategies.

A numerical rating scale from 0 - 3 scores in which 0 score indicated never, 1 sometime, 2 Most of the time and 3 Always, No Stress = 0 – 58, Mild = 59 – 88, Moderate = 89 – 118, Severe = 119 - 117, this scale was used to assess the level of stress experienced by the subjects regarding different life events. For content validity and reliability, suggestions were received from five experts in the field of psychology, nursing education and research. The data was analyzed as per the objectives by applying both descriptive and inferential statistics.

### 3. Results

Mean age of the subjects was 18.32 years, ranging between 17 to 20 years. Table 1 depicts that 62.79% study subjects were between the age range of 17 - 18 years and the rest 37.20%, were between age range of 19 - 20 years. 62.8% subjects were belonging to nuclear families and 30.23% were from the joint families.

Majority of the subjects 86.04% were residing in the hostel of the institute and rest of them were residing either at their own house (11.63%), or rented accommodation (02.32%). It was also observed that majority of the subjects, (72.10%) were from families having parental income more than Rs.10, 000/- month.

**Table 1:** Frequency of Perceived Stress Level of 59 Life events by 43 subjects. N = 43

S. No	Level Of stress	f	%	Score range	Mean
1	moderate	5	11.62	90 - 106	99.2
2	mild	21	48.83	59 - 84	72.33
3	no stress	17	39.53	35 - 52	46.41

Range Score = 35 – 106 65.20: SD = 18.52

### 4. Discussion

This study was conducted on the newly admitted nursing students at nursing college jammu. The findings revealed that they were from the age group of 17 - 20yrs with a mean age of 18.32 yrs. It was also seen that 86.04% were residing in the hostel of the Institute and about 39.76% were from nuclear families. Majority of the subjects, 72.10% were from families where parental income was more than Rs 10, 000 per month, which is one of the factors that the financial area was least stressful for the students. The study also revealed that 48.83% were having mild stress and only 11.62% had moderate stress. Majority of them perceived, Difficulty in participation in social life, due to long college hours, as the most stressful event, followed by shortage of time for self -

study and the third being is problems in getting log book completed, and strict rules and regulations in the hostel, with few picnics and outing.

A study conducted at the college of nursing, Ireland on 70 students, showed that factors related to writing assignment, fulfilling personal needs and academic demands were perceived as major stressors by the students. Factors of little concern were financial issues and attendance on the programme.<sup>9</sup> The present study also revealed that majority of the students tend to use more of the healthy coping strategies. The five most frequently used coping strategies were positive thinking, listening to the music/radio, Indulging in creative activities, talk to parents and pray more.

The findings of the study are supported by similar findings, among Nursing students at Chiang Mai University which revealed that the three most frequently used coping strategies were seeking social support (62.25%), playful problem solving (23.73%) and accepting responsibility (8.47%).<sup>11</sup> 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 a training course in nursing.

Coping with stress for a student nurse is a dynamic and ongoing process, aimed at survival, growth and maintenance of the individual integrity. She tries to restore the imbalance or disequilibrium within herself by attempted adjustment and this attempted adjustment is by the use of various coping strategies which can be healthy or unhealthy.

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