

# Assessment of Factors Associated with Stress and Stress Symptoms among B. Sc. Nursing Students in Selected Nursing Colleges, Mangaluru

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**Abstract:** ***Aim:** To assess the factors associated with stress and stress symptoms among B. Sc. nursing students. **Objective:** To identify the level of stress, stress symptoms and factors associated with stress among B. Sc. nursing students. **Methodology:** Study design: descriptive survey design **Place and Duration of Study:** The study was conducted in selected nursing colleges in Mangaluru offering options in B. Sc. Nursing between Data was collected from 01/11/2017 to 30/07/2018. **Sample:** Stratified non proportionate random sampling technique was used to select 120 B.Sc. Nursing students studying in 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 3<sup>rd</sup> year and 4<sup>th</sup> year at selected colleges. **Results:** Majority of students had high stress whereas least of them had low stress. Based on the rank the most common type of stressor identified by the students was 'stress from taking care of patients' (9.4±0.016) 'stress from clinical environment' (4.65±0.25) was the least reported type of stressor. Highest percentage of the students had poor health status and least percentage of the students had best health status. Based on the rank the most common type of symptom experienced by the students was 'emotional symptoms' (7.68±0.07); meanwhile 'physical symptoms' (5.54±0.035) was the least reported type of symptom. **Conclusion:** Adolescent is the period of experiment and during this period of development they are accomplished by major physical and emotional changes, that changes their relationship and pattern of interaction with others. The nation expects many things from the young generation for the development. Hence it is essential that health development of adolescents need to be carried out in positive manner.*

**Keywords:** stress, stress symptoms, nursing students

## 1. Introduction

Stress in nursing education is acknowledged as one of the most important issues in the modern world.<sup>1</sup> Nursing students perceived high level of stress and are prone to stress than other students.<sup>2</sup> Sources of stress among nursing students could include academic demands<sup>20</sup> and being away from home<sup>3</sup> and financial pressure<sup>4</sup>.

The challenges of nursing colleges can be very stressful for students with busy schedules, critical thinking examinations, and clinical experiences in hospital, students often feels overwhelmed by the many requirements of nursing curricula. All of these elements combined with outside responsibility such as family, children and job have the potential to create intense stress in student lives.<sup>5</sup> A study on stress and coping strategies among nursing students revealed that out of 180 nursing students 34.4% had moderate stress whereas 32.8% and 32.8% fell in the category of low and high stress, respectively.<sup>6</sup>

The most common sources of stress identified by students and faculty that related to academics includes academic demands, assignments and examinations, high workload and combined clinical work with academic demands.<sup>7</sup> Clinical sources including fear of the unknown, a new clinical environment, conflict between the ideal and real clinical practice, unfamiliarity with medical history, lack of professional nursing skills, unfamiliar patient diagnosis and treatment, providing physical, psychological and social care to the patients, fear of making mistakes, giving medication to children, and death of a patient.<sup>8</sup>

Stress has a detrimental effect not only on the psycho-social health of an individual but as well-being as a whole. Researchers has shown us the excessive stress can harmful to the students' academic performance, welfare and

good interfere with learning a complex, psychomotor skills. Further more stress could result to deleterious symptoms such as alcoholism and drug dependence, eating diseases, indiscriminate use of illegal substances, sleep disorders, suicide and even psychological symptoms.<sup>9</sup>

Stress in nursing education is acknowledged as one of the most important issues in the modern world.<sup>1</sup> As far as nursing programs are concerned various research finding indicate that stress exist for students in both clinical and academic aspects of the program. It is important to identify the reason, symptoms, causes and effect of stress among students.<sup>10</sup> Therefore the study was taken up to identify the stress, factors associated with stress, stress symptoms among students of selected colleges in Mangaluru.

## Objectives

- 1) To identify the level of stress among B. Sc. nursing students.
- 2) To identify the factors associated with stress among B. Sc. nursing students.
- 3) To identify the stress symptoms among B. Sc. nursing students.
- 4) To find out the association of level of stress factors associated with stress and stress symptoms with selected demographic variables.

## Hypothesis

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a significant association of level of stress, factors associated with stress and stress symptoms in selected demographic variables.

## 2. Research Methodology

### 2.1 Research approach

Descriptive survey research approach

Schematic representation of descriptive survey approach:

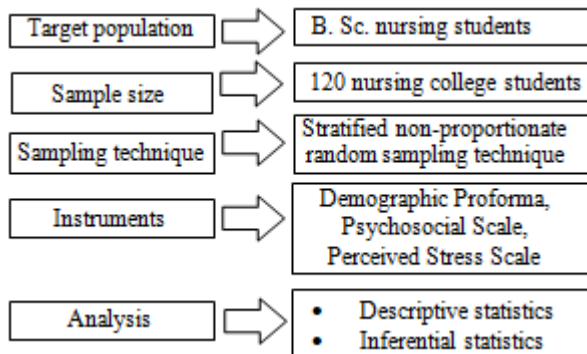


Figure 1: Schematic Representation of the Study Design

#### Setting of the Study

The study was conducted in selected nursing colleges in Mangaluru offering options in B. Sc. Nursing

#### Sample

Stratified non proportionate random sampling technique was used to select 120 B.Sc. Nursing students studying in 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 3<sup>rd</sup> year and 4<sup>th</sup> year at selected colleges in Mangaluru.

#### Description of the Final Tools

The tool for data collection had 3 sections –Section A, B and C.

**Section A:** Demographic proforma which consisted of student's age, sex, course, type of family, type of residence, distance from the campus, education, occupation of the parents, monthly income of the family, and reason for choosing nursing as the career.

**Section B:** Perceived stress scale to assess the students level of stress which consisting of 6 areas, namely, stress from lack of professional knowledge and skills, stress from assignments and workload, stress from taking care of patient, stress from clinical environment, stress from teachers and nursing staff, and stress from peers and daily life.

**Section C:** Physio-psychosocial scale to assess the stress symptoms which consisting of 3 areas, namely, emotional symptoms, socio-behaviour symptoms and physical symptoms.

#### Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected from 01/11/2016 to 30/11/2016. Prior to data collections, permission was obtained from the concerned authorities for conducting the study. Subjects were selected according to the selection criteria. Perceived stress scale and physio-psycho-social scale was administered to 120 B. Sc. nursing students studying in 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 3<sup>rd</sup> year

and 4<sup>th</sup> year from 3 nursing colleges. The average time taken to complete the tool was 20 minutes.

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Nursing Students According to Demographic Variables  
N=120

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age (In years)</b>		
a. 18-19 years	41	34.17
b. 20-21 years	75	62.50
c. 22 and above	4	3.33
<b>Sex</b>		
a. Male	4	3.33
b. Female	116	96.67
<b>Course</b>		
a. 2 <sup>nd</sup> year B. Sc. nursing	40	33.33
b. 3 <sup>rd</sup> year B. Sc. nursing	40	33.33
c. 4 <sup>th</sup> year B. Sc. nursing	40	33.33
<b>Type of Family</b>		
a. Nuclear	109	90.83
b. Joint	11	9.17
<b>Type of Residence</b>		
a. Hostel	117	97.20
b. Home	2	1.67
c. Paying guest	1	0.83
<b>Distance From the Residence</b>		
a. Within campus	14	11.67
b. Between 1-30 kilometres	91	75.83
c. More than 30 kilometres	15	12.50
<b>Reasons for Choosing Nursing As Career</b>		
a. Own choice	44	36.67
b. Parental pressure	13	10.83
c. Friends or peers pressure	4	3.33
d. Going abroad	19	15.83
e. Job security	38	31.67
f. Did not get admission for MBBS or engineering	2	1.67

Data presented in Table 1 shows that;

Majority 75 [62.5%] of the students were between the age group of 20-21 years ;most 116 [96.66%] of the students were females.; Equal number 40 [33.33%] of the students were selected from 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 3<sup>rd</sup> year and 4<sup>th</sup> year batches; Most 109[90.83%] of the students were staying in hostel; Most 91 [75.83%] of the students were staying at a distance of 1-30 kilometres from college ; Highest percentage 44 [36.66%] of the students selected nursing as a career by their own choice

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Demographic Characteristics of Parents of Nursing Students  
N=120

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Education of Parents</b>		
<i>Father</i>		
a. Primary	9	7.50
b. High school	51	42.50
c. PUC	34	28.33
d. Degree and above	21	17.50
e. Professional	5	4.17
<i>Mother</i>		
a. Primary	3	2.50
b. High school	27	22.50
c. PUC	53	44.16
d. Degree and above	29	24.17

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
e. Professional	8	6.67
<b>Occupation of Parents</b>		
<i>Father</i>		
a. Farmer	50	41.67
b. Business	27	22.50
c. Official	9	7.50
d. Professional	6	5.00
e. Others	28	23.33
<i>Mother</i>		
a. Farmer	19	15.83
b. Business	2	1.67
c. Official	6	5.00
d. Professional	5	4.17
e. Others	88	73.33
<b>Monthly Income of Family</b>		
a. Less than Rs. 5,000	11	9.87
b. Rs. 5,000-10,000	47	39.27
c. Rs. 10,000-15,000	27	22.53
d. More than Rs. 15,000	34	28.33

The data in Table 2 shows the following findings:

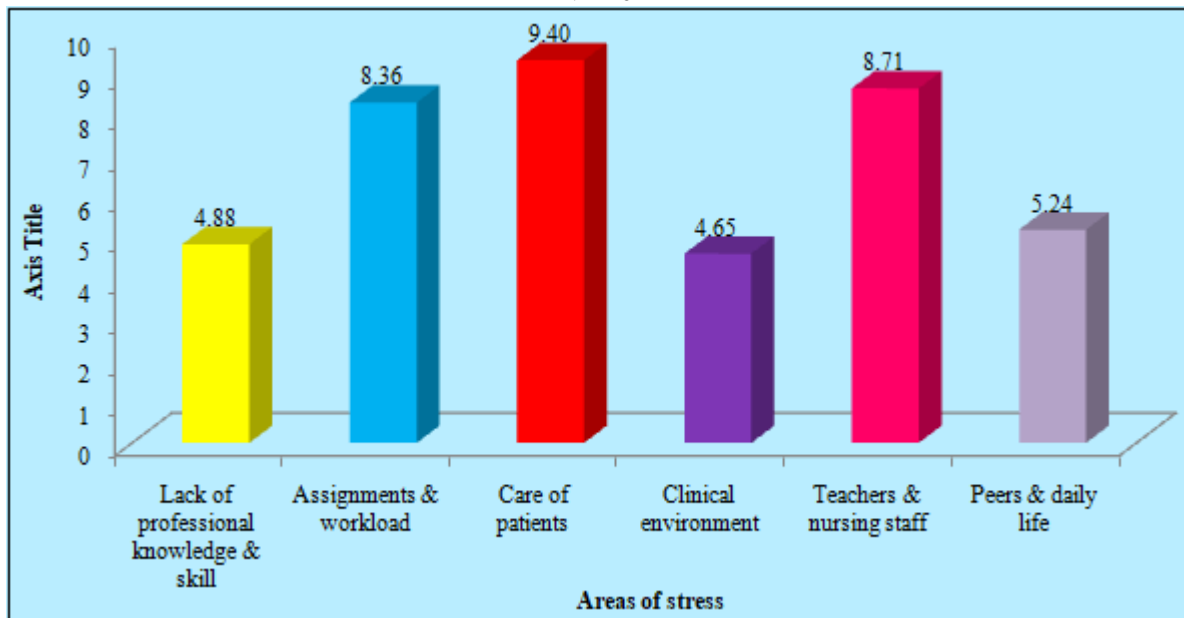
Majority 51[42.5%] of the students' fathers had studied up to high school. Majority 53[44.16%] of the students' mothers had studied up to PUC. Half 50 [41.66%] of the students' fathers were farmers. Majority 88[73.33%] of the students' mothers were housewives. Highest percentage 47[39.16%] of the students had family income between Rs.5,000-10,000

**Table 4:** Range, Mean, Standard Deviation, Median of Stress Score of Nursing Students

N=120			
Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median
0-9.4	41.03	0.038	42

Table 4 shows that the range of stress score was (0-9.4) and the mean stress score of nursing students was (41.03 ± 0.038) and median was (42).

**Table 5:** Mean, Standard Deviation, Ranking of Perceived Stress Subscale among Nursing Students  
N=120

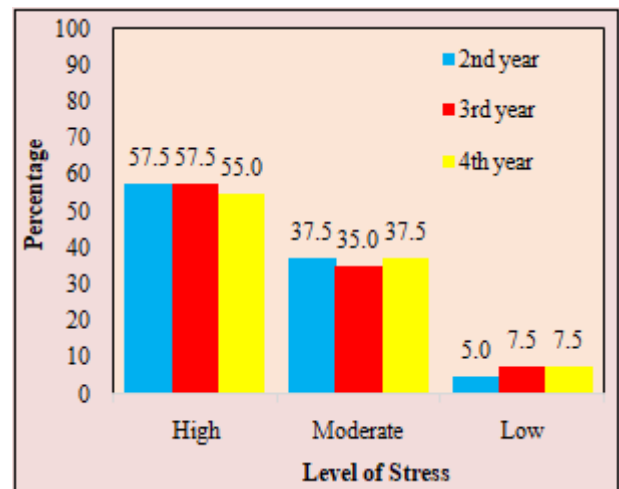


**Figure 4:** Area-wise Mean Stress Scores of B. Sc. Nursing Students

Figure 4 shows that, based on the rank the most common type of stressor identified by the students was 'stress from taking care of patients'(9.4±0.016) followed by 'stress from teachers and nursing staff' (8.71±0.077). Meanwhile, 'stress from clinical environment' (4.65±0.25) was the least reported type of stressor.

**Section C: Description of Stress Score of Nursing Students According to 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 3<sup>rd</sup> year and 4<sup>th</sup> year B. Sc. Nursing**

**Table 6:** Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Level of Stress Among 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 3<sup>rd</sup> year and 4<sup>th</sup> year B. Sc. Nursing Students

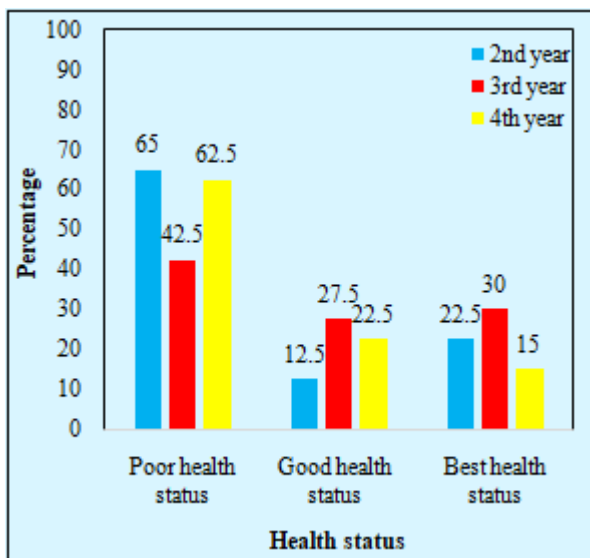


**Figure 5:** Bar Diagram Representing Percentage Distribution of Level of Stress among 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 3<sup>rd</sup> year and 4<sup>th</sup> year Nursing Students

Table 6 and Figure 5 shows that majority of 2<sup>nd</sup> year [57.5%], 3<sup>rd</sup> year [57.5%] and 4<sup>th</sup> year [55%] students had high stress whereas least of 2<sup>nd</sup> year [5%], 3<sup>rd</sup> year [7.5%] and 4<sup>th</sup> year [7.5%] had low stress.

**Section D:** Description of Physio-psycho-social Scale Among Nursing Students

**Section E:** Description of Stress Symptoms of Nursing Students According to 2<sup>nd</sup>Year, 3<sup>rd</sup>Year and 4<sup>th</sup> Year



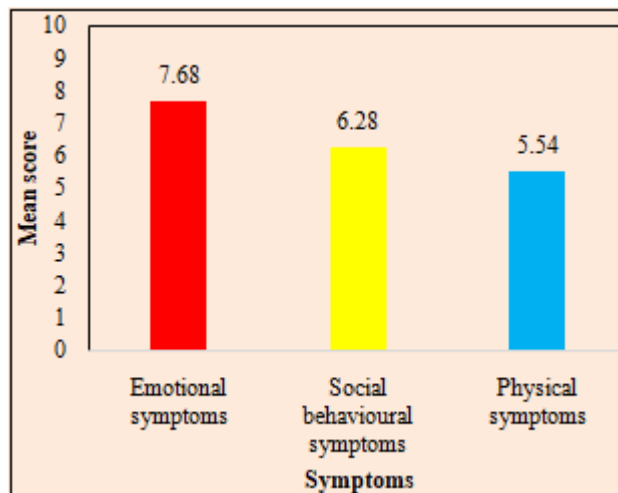
**Figure 8:** Bar Diagram Representing Distribution of Health Status of 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 3<sup>rd</sup> year and 4<sup>th</sup> year Nursing Students

Table 11 and Figure 8 shows that highest percentage (65%) of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year students had poor health status and least percentage (12.5%) of the students had good health status. Majority of the 3<sup>rd</sup> students (42.5%) had poor health status and least percentage (27.5%) of them had good health status. In 4<sup>th</sup> year majority (62.5%) of the students had poor health status and least percentage (11%) of the students had best health status.

**Table 9:** Range, Mean, Standard Deviation, Median of Physio-Psycho-Social Symptom Score among College Students  
N=120

Range	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median
0-7.68	19.75	0.44	18

Table 9 shows that range of symptoms score was 0-7.68 and the mean symptoms score of nursing students was (19.54±0.44) and median was 18.



**Figure 7:** Mean Score of Physio-Psycho-Social Symptoms of B. Sc. Nursing Students

Figure 7 shows that based on the rank the most common type of symptom experienced by the students was 'emotional symptoms' (7.68±0.07) followed by 'social behavioural symptoms' (6.28±0.06). Meanwhile 'physical symptoms' (5.54±0.035) was the least reported type of symptom.

**Section G: Association of Stress score with Demographic Variables**

In order to find out association of stress scores with demographic variables, the following null hypothesis was formulated:

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant association of level of stress with selected demographic variables.

Chi square was computed to test the above null hypothesis.

**Table 13:** Association of Level of Stress with Selected Demographic Variables, N=120

Variables	χ <sup>2</sup>	df	Table value	Inference
Age	3.520	4	9.48	Non-Significant
Sex	0.575	2	5.99	Non-Significant
Course	0.601	4	9.48	Non-Significant
Type of family	2.417	2	5.99	Non-Significant
Type of residence	2.630	4	9.48	Non-Significant
Distance from the campus	6.0992	4	9.48	Non-Significant
Education of the parents				
Father	8.180	8	15.5	Non-Significant
Mother	20.261	8	15.5	Significant
Occupation of the parents				
Father	16	8	15.5	Significant
Mother	17.1	8	15.5	Significant
Monthly income of the family	3.13	6	12.5	Non-Significant
Reason for choosing nursing as a career	41.59	10	18.3	Significant

The data presented in Table 13 shows that there was significant association of stress score with education of parents [mother], occupation of parents [both mother and

father], and research for choosing nursing as career. Hence research hypothesis accepted for these variables. But there was no association of age, sex, course, type of family, type of residence, distance from campus, education of the parents (father) and monthly income of the family with stress scores. Hence, the null hypothesis  $H_{01}$  is accepted and research hypothesis is rejected for these variables.

In order to find out association of physio-psycho-socio symptoms with demographic variables following null hypothesis was formulated.

$H_{02}$ : Here is no significant association of physio-psycho-socio symptoms with selected demographic variables.

Chi square was computed to find out the significant association.

**Table 14:** Association of Physio-psycho-socio Symptoms with Selected Demographic Variables

N=120

Variables	$\chi^2$	df	Table Value	Inference
Age	4.406	4	9.48	Non-Significant
Sex	12.79	2	5.99	Significant
Course	6.371	4	9.48	Non-Significant
Type of family	7.616	2	5.99	Significant
Type of residence	14.71	4	9.48	Significant
Distance from the campus	7.66	4	9.48	Non-Significant
Education of the parents				
<i>Father</i>	7.479	8	15.50	Non-Significant
<i>Mother</i>	13.018	8	15.50	Non-Significant
Occupation of the parents				
<i>Father</i>	16.675	8	15.50	Significant
<i>Mother</i>	24.297	8	15.50	Significant
Monthly income of the family	4.94833	6	12.59	Non-Significant
Reason for choosing nursing as a career	12.9296	10	18.30	Non-Significant

The data presented in the Table 14 shows that there was a significant association of physio-psycho-socio symptoms scores with sex, type of family, type of residence and occupation of parents (both). Hence research hypothesis accepted for these variables, but there was no significant association of age, course, distance from campus, education of parents (both), monthly of the family and reason for choosing nursing as a career with the symptom scores. Hence null hypothesis is accepted and research hypothesis is rejected for these variables.

### 3. Discussion of the Findings with Other Studies

#### Discussion of Demographic Variables

In the current study majority (62.5%) of the students were in the age group of 20 – 21 years and most (96.66%) of the students were females. Most (90.83%) of the subjects were living in nuclear family with monthly income that ranges

from

Rs.5000–Rs.10000. Most (97.5%) of the subjects were residing in hostel and majority of them lived at the distance between 1–30 kilometres.

The present study findings are supported by studies on assessment of stress of student nurses showed that majority of subjects were between the age group of 17-23 years and majority of the subjects were females<sup>11</sup>. The current study also supported by a study on stress and coping strategies among nursing students which showed that majority of the subjects belonged to nuclear family and monthly income that ranges from Rs.5000–Rs.15000<sup>12</sup>.

The current study is contradicted by a study on source of stress and coping strategies among nursing students which showed that the majority of the subjects were males and in another study on factors associated with stress among nursing students showed that highest percentage of the students were in the age of 18-19 years<sup>13</sup>.

In the current study equal percentage (33.33%) of subjects were selected from 2nd year, 3rd year and 4th year, whereas in a study to assess stress, stressors and stress responses of student nurses shows that majority (65.57%) of the subjects were from 4th year and (34.43%) was from 3rd year<sup>11</sup>. Another study to assess the stress and coping strategies among nursing students showed that majority of the subjects was from 4th year BSc (N)<sup>12</sup>. In a study to assess the factors associated with stress among nursing students showed that half of the subjects were from 3rd year<sup>14</sup>.

In the current study highest percentage [42.5%] of the subjects' fathers had studied up to high school and highest percentage [44.16%] of the student's mothers studied up to PUC. Highest percentage [41.66%] of the subject's fathers were farmers and Majority [73.33%] of the subjects' mother were housewives. Highest percentage [39.16%] of the subjects had family income of the family was between Rs.5000-10000.

The present study findings are supported by a study on "Stress and Coping Strategies Among Nursing Students" which shows that highest percentage (35.6%) of the subjects fathers were farmer and majority [76.6%] of the subjects mothers were housewives<sup>12</sup>. The present study is also supported by another, study on "Stress, Stressors and Stress Response of Student Nurses in a Government Nursing School" which showed that highest percentage [40.96%] of the subject's income of the family was in the range of Rs.5000 – Rs.15000<sup>11</sup>.

The current study is contradicted by a study on "Stress and Coping Strategies among Nursing Students" which shows that highest percentage [44.4%] of the subjects' parents had their education up to graduation. Majority [50.6%] of the subjects belonged to families having monthly income more than Rs.10000<sup>12</sup>.

### Discussion of Perceived Stress Scores among Nursing Students

A current study finding revealed that majority [58.3%] of the subjects had high stress. The present study is supported by a study on "Stress, Coping Strategies among Nursing Students" which showed that majority [75%] of the students had high stress<sup>11</sup>.

The present study finds are contradicted by studies showed that student nurses had moderate stress<sup>11,13</sup>. In another study conducted among Greek student nurses showed that student nurses stress level was mild<sup>47</sup>.

In current study most common type of stressors identified by subjects were stress from taking care of patients, stress from teachers and nursing staff and stress from assignments and workload.

The present study findings are supported by a study to assess "stress, stressors and stress responses of student nurses shows that most common type of stressor experienced by the subjects were stress from assignments and workload followed by stress from lack of knowledge and skills and stress from teachers and nursing staffs<sup>14</sup>.

Current results revealed that majority [57.5%] of the subjects 2<sup>nd</sup> year and 3<sup>rd</sup> year had high stress than 4<sup>th</sup> year. The current result also revealed that perceived stress levels decreased according to the year of course. Senior student nurses in presented lower level of stress compared than junior students nurses. These could be due to the fact that, as they get into a higher level, they were able to adapt and adjust to the academic and clinical requirements of the programme. Moreover, as they progress into the higher level of programme, they have already acquired and gained mastery in nursing skills necessary in their clinical experience and more or less develop more efficient and effective way in dealing with different stressors.

This result is similar with other studies where they found that junior nursing student showed a higher anxiety scores than senior students<sup>14</sup>. In contrast in another study some students reported that 2<sup>nd</sup> year students presented higher level of stress than 1<sup>st</sup> year students<sup>48</sup>. In another study the investigator reported that stress experienced by nursing students in clinical practice increased as they progressed through the program in a study conducted among European nursing students, self-reported stress was at the highest during the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the programme<sup>49</sup>. In another study results shows that senior students have low stress level than junior students<sup>41,47</sup>.

Finding of this study calls for a greater challenge for nurse's educators in planning strategies to prevent recurrent of stress among students while keeping them motivated to achieve for a greater learning.

### Comparison of Physio-psycho-social Symptoms Among Nursing Students

Present study revealed that majority [56.6%] of the subjects had poor health status. Students who perceived higher level of stress where more likely to have poorer physio-psycho

social health. In a study investigator reported that high level of stress as possible risk for the health of the students and that stress can affect people's physical psychological and social health if adaptational outcomes cannot be achieved<sup>48</sup>. In contrast some studies showed that perceived physio-psycho social health in student nurse is considered as good health.<sup>14,50</sup>

In the current study most common type of symptoms experienced by the subject was emotional symptoms followed by socio behavioural symptoms and physical symptoms. The present study findings are supported by study on "Assessment of Stress of Student Nurses" which showed that the most common type of symptom experienced by the subjects was emotional symptoms followed by socio behavioural symptoms and physical symptoms<sup>14,34,50</sup>.

The current study result also revealed that majority [65%] of the students 2<sup>nd</sup> year had poor health status compared to 3<sup>rd</sup> year and 4<sup>th</sup> year students.

Present study finding is also supported by a study on "Stress, Stressors and Stress Response of Student Nurses" showed that perceived physio-psycho-social health decrease according to age<sup>14</sup>. Younger students tend to experience or report emotional symptoms as response to stress compared to that of older students<sup>14</sup>. This may be due to fact that as students get older they gained not only better knowledge and clinical expertise but also with problem solving skills and stress perceiving strategies necessary when faced with various stressors.

### 4. Conclusion

Adolescent is the period of experiment and during this period of development they are accomplished by major physical and emotional changes, that changes their relationship and pattern of interaction with others. Adapting to all these changes in relationship, social context status and performance criteria can generate great stress, feeling of rejection and anger at perceived or real failure. The nation expects many things from the young generation for the development. Hence it is essential that health development of adolescents need to be carried out in positive manner.

The main finding of the study showed that majority (58.3%) of the students had low stress. The study also find out that 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 3<sup>rd</sup> year students were having equal level of high stress (57.5%) while assessing health status. Highest percentage of the students (56.66%) were having poor health status and least percentage of students (20.83%) were having good health status.

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