

# Stress among Nurses, Causes and Impact on their Performance

Elizabeth M Varghese<sup>1</sup>, Aruna KR<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** ***Aim:** A study to assess the Stress among Nurses, causes and impact on their performance in a tertiary care hospital, Uttar Pradesh. **Objectives:** 1.To assess the stress level among the nurses. 2. To identify the cause of stress among nurses. 3. To assess the impact of stress on the performance of the Nurses. **Methodology:** Non-experimental descriptive study.60 registered nurses were selected through probability sampling technique. Ethical clearance was obtained from the ethical Committee of the hospital. Tool consisted of a self administered questionnaire, standardised stress assessment tool and rating scale to assess the performance of nurses. **Findings:** Out 60 nurses majority (45%) were in the age group of 20-30 years, and majority (75%) were married, 56.67% were having less than 10 years of experience in nursing field. 60% of nurses possessed BSc Nursing qualification, Majority (93.33%) of the nurses had not attended any workshop or course on stress management. Majority (83.33%) of the nurses experienced moderate levels of stress, and 16.66% of nurses had mild level of stress. None of the nurses experienced severe stress. The major factors causing severe stress were found to be non-availability of medical assistance in emergency calls (36.6%), Poor staffing (33.20%), overwork & shift work (34.86%) and poor scope for professional growth (33.33%) The study revealed that 30% of the nurses had excellent overall performance and 21.66% had average performance. The mean score of performance was 137.06 out of 212 which is at 64.65% level. It was also found that there is no statistically significant relationship between level of stress among nurses and their performance as the calculated value is less than table value at 0.05 level of significance.*

**Keywords:** Stress, Nurses, Causes, Impact, Performance

## 1. Introduction

Stress is a part and parcel of human lifestyle. Stress is a bodily or mental tension resulting from factors that tend to alter an existent equilibrium. It is motivating for achieving anything in the life. It is an acknowledged truth that all human being is forced to undergo different kinds of stressors in their life time. Stress has been labeled as a precursor to an outcome, and a way of handling situations.

Occupational stress is an important factor that causes physical and psychological complication in the employees and there by decrease the productivity of organizations and job satisfaction of employees. Today, the stress caused by job is common in all the professions. This is particularly high among health care providers because of being responsible for the health of others under their care.

Nursing is a profession within the health care sector which centres on the care of individuals, families, communities, in order to help them to achieve, preserve or improve the finest health and strengthen the life. Nursing is generally perceived as demanding profession. Along with the increased demand and progress in the nursing profession, stress among the nurses has also increased. For nurses and the hospital, job stress is very expensive as it results in decrease productivity and increased attrition rate.

The common manifestations of stress are tiredness, harsh behaviour, anxiety, increase of blood pressure, lack of self-confidence, lack of job satisfaction, decrease in efficiency. Stress affects the cognition which can be manifested in mental slowness, confusion, general negative attitudes or thoughts, constant worry, difficulty concentrating, forgetfulness, difficulty thinking in a logical sequence, the sense that life is overwhelming, unable to solve problem etc.

Stress is easily manageable if it is recognized at an early

stage. The researcher works as an administrator in a tertiary care hospital where large numbers of nurses are employed. To improve job satisfaction among nurses and also to effectively manage the nursing manpower resources, the researcher took interest to find out the level of stress among nurses.

### Aim

To assess the Stress among Nurses, causes and impact on their performance in a tertiary care hospital, Lucknow.

### Objectives of the study

- 1) To assess the stress level among the nurses.
- 2) To identify the cause of stress among nurses.
- 3) To assess the impact of stress on the performance of the Nurses.

## 2. Materials and Method

A non-experimental descriptive design was used to conduct the study. The research setting was a multi-speciality tertiary care hospital with a training centre. Sample of this study were registered nurses employed in the tertiary care hospital. Sixty nurses were selected as sample for the study through probability sampling technique.

The tool prepared consisted of demographic profile, Standardized stress assessment inventory adapted from Expanded Nursing Stress Scale<sup>13</sup>. A five point likert scale was used for assessment of factors causing stress among Nurses. It consisted of 25 factors which were considered to cause stress among nurses. The factors were related to work environment, health care team members, type of patients, availability of materials and supplies etc. A Rating scale (Nursing Performance Assessment Scale) to assess the impact of stress on the performance of nurses was prepared. It consisted six dimensions namely Nursing care delivery,

Teaching & Collaboration, Interpersonal relations & communication, Leadership and Professional development.

Two research assistants was prepared by the researcher to collect data so as to reduce inter rater variability. They were trained to administer the questionnaire and to carry out specific observation during a fixed time frame on the days of observations, so as to eliminate bias in data collection. The data related to demography, nurse’s stress and the factors causing stress among nurses was collected initially using the self administered stress assessment inventory and the likert scale to assess stress factors. Following this the nurses were observed for their performance by a non participatory observation technique and were evaluated on a four point rating scale.

Ethical clearance was obtained from the ethical committee of the hospital and the data was collected after obtaining written informed consent from each participant.

### 3. Discussion

Sixty nurses were selected as sample through probability sampling technique. Out 60 nurses majority (45%) were in the age group of 20-30 years, and 75% were married. 23% of them were single while 1.67% was divorced. Majority of the nurses (56.67%) were having less than 10 years of experience in nursing practice. Maximum (60%) of nurses possessed BSc Nursing qualification, 25% had Diploma in General Nursing & Midwifery, and only 5% (3) nurses had MSc Nursing as their qualification. 10% of the nurses had also undergone PB Diploma in Nursing. Majority (93.33%) of the nurses had not attended any workshop or course on stress management. However 6.67% of the nurses had attended course or workshop on stress management.

#### Level of Stress among Nurses

Majority (83.33%) of nurses experienced moderate levels of stress, and 16.66% had mild level of stress. It is noteworthy that none of the nurses experienced severe stress. The

findings of this is similar to the findings of a cross-sectional study on job stress in nurses by Arash Najmi et al which revealed majority of the nurses (87.5% male & 94% female) experienced normal stress<sup>7</sup>. But the findings of this study was in contrast to the findings of the study conducted by Shiva Prasad AH at Shimoga which revealed 52% nurses experiencing severe stress<sup>2</sup>. Godwin Adzakupah et al. too concluded from their study that there is a high level of stress among nurses at the St Dominic Hospital in Ghana<sup>1</sup>.

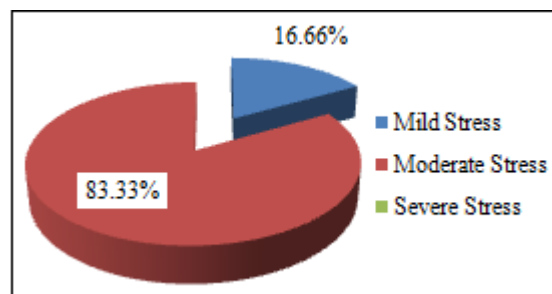


Figure 1: Level of stress among nurses

#### Factors causing Stress among Nurses

The major factors causing severe stress were found to be non-availability of medical assistance in emergency calls (36.6%), poor staffing (33.20%), overwork & shift work (34.86%) and poor scope for professional growth (33.33%) (Fig 2). It was found that majority of nurses (55%) experienced moderate stress due to various factors like handling of terminally ill/dying patients, 51.66% due to hostility of patient’s relatives, 50% due to patient’s impatience, 43.33% due to agony of critically ill/dying patients, 41.66% due to lack of essential services (water, electricity, telephone, etc) in the ward and domineering doctors. The study also revealed that some of the factors which caused mild stress among majority of nurses were sight of dead bodies (48.33%), peer hostility (43.33%), conflicts with patients (35%), conflict between demands of job and home (31.66%).

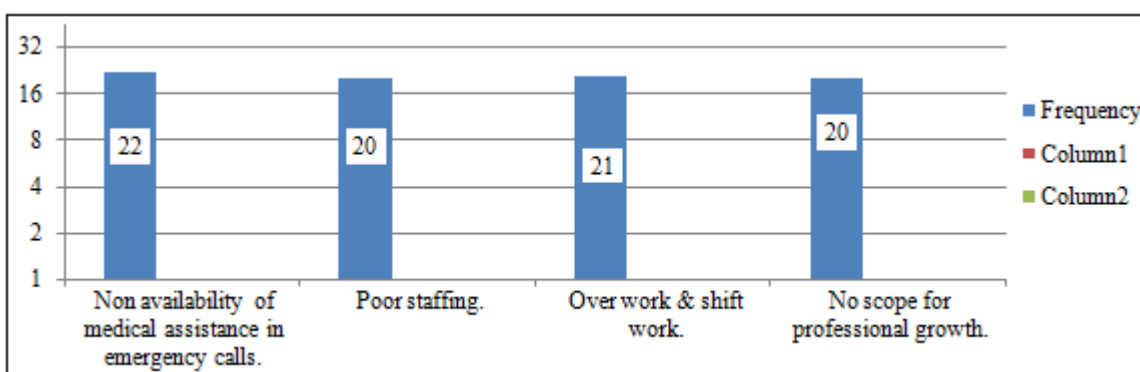


Figure 2: Factors causing Severe Stress among Nurses

The findings of the study conducted by Shiv Prasad the factors causing severe stress among nurses were their workload and patient and their families, problems related to peer ,death & dying patients, problem related to supervisors<sup>2</sup>. In another study the major cause of stress was identified as handling large number of patients alone, inadequate staffing, long working hours, lack of break period during shift, frequent night duties, nursing patients

without relatives<sup>2</sup>. Other factors included harassment from aggressive relatives, nursing difficult patients, exposure to infectious diseases, job insecurity etc<sup>1</sup>.

#### Performance of Nurses

The performance was classified into excellent, good, average and poor. This study revealed that 30% of the nurses demonstrated excellent & good overall performance

respectively, and 21.66% had average performance, while 18.33% had poor overall performance (Fig 3&4). The mean score of performance was 137.06 out of 212 which is at 64.65% level.

This study demonstrated that nurses had excellent performance in specific areas like Nursing care (35%), IPR & Communication (36.6%), leadership (35%), and professionalism (30%). However the performance in the area of teaching & collaboration was rated poor in majority of samples (35%). (Fig3&4)

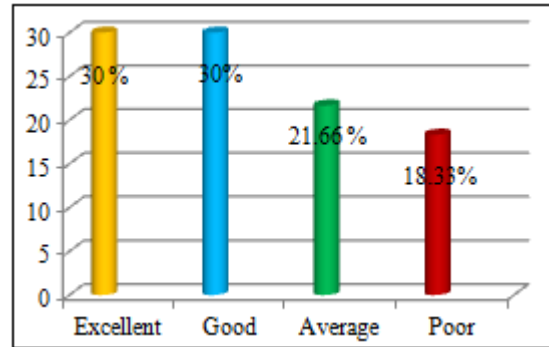


Figure 3: Overall performance of Nurses

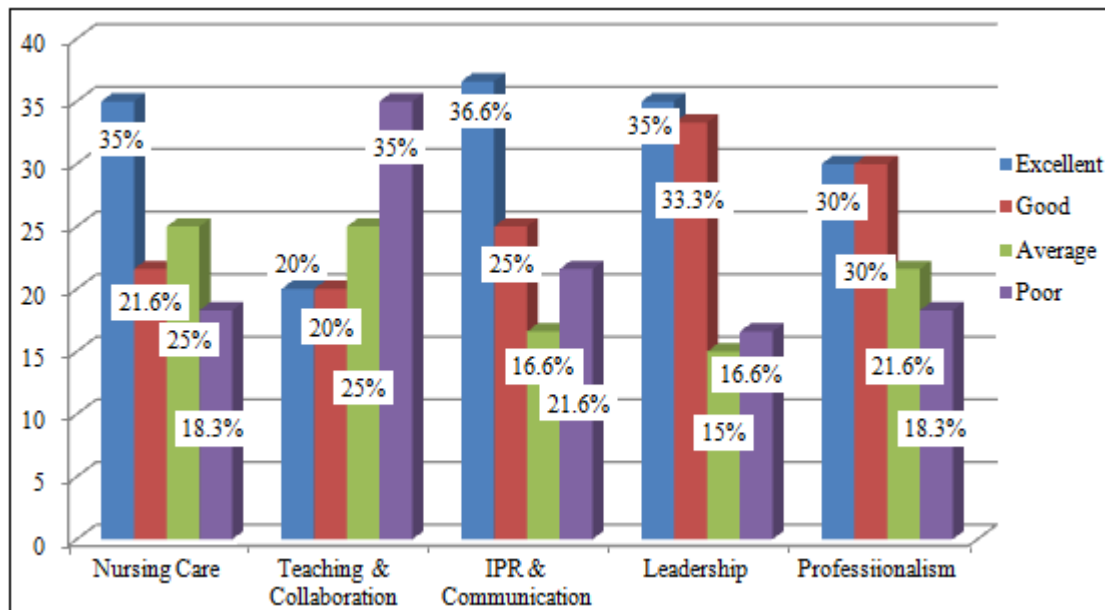


Figure 4: Performance of Nurses on different Aspects

**Association of level of stress among nurses and their performance**

The study revealed that there was no statistically significant relationship between level of stress among nurses and their performance as the calculated value was less than table value at level of significance 0.05 (Table-1). This finding could be because the sample size was small.

**Table 1:** Relationship of level of stress among nurses and their Performance

| Performance Level of Stress | Mild     | Moderate   | Severe | Total | Chi square | Df | P value at 0.05 |
|-----------------------------|----------|------------|--------|-------|------------|----|-----------------|
| Excellent                   | 3 (3)    | 15 (15)    | 0 (0)  | 18    | 6.52       | 6  | 12.59           |
| Good                        | 6 (3)    | 12 (15)    | 0 (0)  | 18    |            |    |                 |
| Average                     | 1 (2.16) | 12 (10.83) | 0 (0)  | 13    |            |    |                 |
| Poor                        | 0 (1.83) | 11 (9.16)  | 0 (0)  | 11    |            |    |                 |
| Total                       | 10       | 50         | 0      | 60    |            |    |                 |

**4. Conclusion**

Nursing is generally perceived as demanding profession. It is found moderate level of stress exists among Nurses. The major factors causing severe stress were found to be non-availability of medical assistance in emergency calls, poor staffing, overwork & shift work and poor scope for professional growth. Identifying these causes of stress among the nurses will help in planning and implementing strategies to address and manage stress. The performance of

majority of nurses was excellent. However there was no significant statistical relationship of level of stress among nurses and their performance. A similar study can be done on a larger sample.

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