

JOB STRESS AND COPING MECHANISM (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PRIVATE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES IN VANIYAMBADI TOWN)

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ABSTRACT

Stress has become very common due to dynamic social factors and the changing needs of life styles. It is an adaptive reaction of human being to an outward situation which would lead to physical, mental and behavioural changes. Stress can make a person productive and constructive, when it is identified and well managed. The word stress is found in all professions. More so in Medical professional people are highly stressed. The focus of this paper is to study the stress level among private hospital employees and their coping strategies. The sources of job stress that have been investigated in this study include role ambiguity, role conflict, job complexity, task variety and management role. A survey has been studied about 90 employees in private hospitals, who are working in and around Vaniyambadi town, located in Vellore district, Tamil Nadu. Some of the stress coping strategies identified by this study includes stress management programs, physical activities planned in job design, life style modification programs, finding triggers and stressors, supportive organization culture, stress counseling programs and spiritual programs.

KEYWORDS: Stress, Adaptive Reaction, Behavioural Change, Hospital Employees and Coping Strategies

INTRODUCTION

Work is the major activity of our life which causes a great deal of stress. Due to competitive global, most of the people like to spend an available time for their carrier development, that intention forces them fall into stressful situation. Usually people are more worried about to balancing personal and official life because, the outcome of both lives produces stress repeatedly in most of the time. Stress may be referred to as an unpleasant state of emotional and physiological arousal that people experience in situations that they perceive as dangerous or threatening to their well-being. The word stress means different things to different people. Some people define stress as events or situations that cause them to feel tension, pressure, or negative emotion such as anxiety and anger. Others view stress as a response to these situations. This response includes physiological changes such as increased heart rate, muscle pain and emotional and behavioural changes. Stress can cause acute psychological, behavioural, or physical reactions that can eventually lead to illness such as depression and coronary heart diseases.

Job stress can come from work environment, such as work overload, poor interpersonal relations and physical working conditions, as well as job-related factors like discrimination, lack of opportunity for advancement and boredom. Both men and women face many of these stressors, but working women face unique difficulties that can cause additional stress. Sex discrimination and the pressure of combining work and family create particular stress on working women.

Nowadays, work stress is the fastest growing cause of absence from work. Therefore, managements of every private and public organization or institution should consider job stress as a serious problem and they must take measures to prevent employees from suffering from stress arising from their work. This study made an attempt to know the stress level and coping techniques followed by private hospital employees in Vaniyambadi town.

The reason for selecting Vaniyambadi as a study area is that, leather tannery is a major industry of this town. The tanneries were under pressure because of a governmental crackdown on tanneries which did not have effluent treatment facilities and hence, caused water pollution. In such situation many people in Vaniyambadi were affected by different illnesses. So the Government and many private hospitals are handling many patients every day. The job of every employee in hospitals of this area was under stress in certain cases.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Depression and hypertension are major problems to all human beings. The reason is physical as well as mental strain in their work place. Strain creates stress especially to working people, but this strain is little heavy in the field of medical profession since they deal with different types of patients and their diseases. The People who are working in hospital should have tolerance and be service minded but practically that does not happen for which the reasons may be infinite. But one of the reasons is work stress. So the researchers have the intention to know their stress level, its causes and also the coping techniques followed, by the employees.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the study is to know the causes and the level of job stress among the private hospital employees. The secondary objective of the research: is to know the attribute of stress and the mechanisms that are being used to cope up with stress.

Need for the Study

In the present scenario, employees often get distracted from their work due to various reasons and one of the main reasons is work stress. Due to heavy stress some of the employees are take extreme decisions like suicide, and become addicted to wrong habits. In order to help those type of people especially the medical field employees, this study will help to prevent and also will give some coping strategies to those who are in heavy job stress.

Scope of the Study

In this study, the researchers like to analyze the causes of stress and suggest the employees to overcome the same through some coping mechanisms.

- This study will be useful to find out the problems of job stress in the present and future scenarios.
- This study will be useful to find out the weaker area of the employees regarding stress.

Limitations

- The researchers have chosen only 90 respondents for this study due to time constraint.
- The researchers have adopted only convenient sampling as it is not possible to gather all respondents from the hospital.

- The researchers have conducted their study within the limit of Vaniyambadi town.
- The validity of the conclusion depends upon the honesty and sincerity with which the data has been provided by the respondents.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dubrin (1984) has studied that there are certain signs and symptoms that reflect the existence of stress. Relevant literature classifies stress symptoms into physiological, emotional and behavioural. Physiological symptoms include the increase in blood pressure, breathing rate, heart beat rate and sweating. Yet, if stress is not handled in a positive way, certain unpleasant and dangerous results such as heart attacks, increased cholesterol level, and ulcers may appear. The most common emotional symptoms are anxiety, tension and depression, lack of interest, hopeless feeling, mental exhaustion, and low self-confidence. If stress level increases less job satisfaction is expected. Among the most common work-related behavioural symptoms include decreased performance, absenteeism, difficulties in concentration and communication, higher alcohol and drug abuse, irresponsible behaviour and higher rate of smoking.

According to **Caplan R.P (1994)**, “A study on stress, Anxiety and depression in Hospital consultant’s Global Hospital pvt Ltd in Chennai” has researched and found that health sector faces usually large amount of stress. Stress among doctors is high and most of the medical professions also are suffering from increased stress, but the attention has been focused mainly on junior doctors and their excessive hours of work.

Khuwaja Ali Khal et al (2002) in this study “A study on stress and its effects of job satisfaction services Hospital, Lahore” have highlighted that stress is basically a mental strain from the internal or external stimulus that refrains a person from responding towards its environment in a normal manner. These stress levels can be internal or external for doctors, from their personal lives or professional lives.

Nature and Definition of Stress

Morgan, (1994) has stated that however, it is true that not all stress is negative distress; there is also a positive side of stress (eu stress). Therefore, there is a reasonable degree of stress, which motivates some people to high performance, and there is also too much stress which causes low performance. However, there is no situation without some stress.

Ramirez et al., (1996) in their study has stated that literature includes hundreds of stress definitions, most of which involve complex interactions between one’s work environments. Therefore, stress refers to the situation at which a person’s skills and abilities do not match with the work demands and requirements, and when the employee’s needs are not fulfilled by the job environment.

Golubic et al (2009) have identified the most severe work-related stressors among 1086 university hospital nurses in Croatia. Organisation of work and financial issues, public criticism and hazards at workplace are measured by the Occupational Stress Assessment Questionnaire (OSAQ).

Kamal et al (2012) have aimed to determine the occupational stress and its association with job satisfaction in Taif public hospitals in Saudi Arabia. A descriptive-cross sectional study was conducted on a sample of 148 nurses using ENSS. The results indicated that the most stressful subscale was “Dealing with patients and their families, followed by Workload”.

METHODOLOGY

Researchers have adopted descriptive method for this research because this design would help to get the complete picture of characteristics of a particular individual or group. Primary data was collected by the researchers with the help of a structured questionnaire. The sample unit of the research was private hospital employees who are working in Vaniyambadi town. Total sample size of the study was 90 private hospital employees working in different hospitals in Vaniyambadi town. The researchers used convenient sampling method for this study. The researchers have done pre test in 15 respondents from 3 different hospitals. The reliability of the pre test was found that the Cronbach alpha value is more than 0.709 by using SPSS. The necessary secondary data were used to strengthen the effectiveness of the research.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The researcher uses the tool "Percentage Analysis" for this study to provide a scientific and mathematical solution to a problem.

DEMOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

Table 1: Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	25	28%
Female	65	72%
Total	90	100%

The above table shows the gender of respondents. Among the 90 respondents 72% are Female and 28% are Male. Hence, it is understood from the above table that the majority of respondents (i.e.) 72% are Female.

Table 2: Age of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
23-33	52	58%
34-43	32	36%
44-53	6	6%
Total	90	100%

More than half of the respondents belong to the age group of 23 to 33 years, and rests i.e., 1/3rd of the respondents are in the age group between 34 to 43 years and few (6%) are in the age group of 44 to 53 years. It is evident from the above table that the majority of the respondents (58%) belong to the age group of 23-33, which is the prime group in the medical field.

Table 3: Marital Status of the Respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	24	27%
Married	66	73%
Total	90	100%

The table clearly states here that more than half of the respondents are married. Only 27% of the respondents are unmarried. The researchers have found that married people are facing more stress because they are balancing between the official work and family responsibilities.

Table 4: Educational Qualification of the Respondents

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Below SSLC	1	1%
Upto +2	15	17%
Diploma	53	59%
Degree	21	23%
Total	90	100%

With regard to the Educational qualification the above table indicates that 1% of respondents are under the category of below SSLC, 17% of respondents are in the category of upto +2, 59% of the respondents are in the category of Diploma, and 23% of respondents are in the category of Degree. Most of the employments in medical the fields are occupied by the diploma holders.

Table 5: Designation of the Respondents

Designation	Frequency	Percentage
Technical & Lab Assistants	14	16%
Doctor	21	23%
Nurse	55	61%
Total	90	100%

The above table shows that 16% of the respondents are technical and lab assistants and 23% of the respondents are doctors and 61% of respondents are nurses. The researchers have found that the role of nurses is very vital. Hence, they are more in number in the hospitals.

Table 6: Monthly Income of the Respondents

Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage
Below 10000	70	78%
10001-20000	4	4%
20001-30000	11	12%
30001-40000	5	6%
Total	90	100%

The above table reveals that only 6% of the respondents' monthly salary is more than 30000. Nearly 3/4th of the respondents' monthly salary is less than 10000. Majority of the respondents' salary is very low. This causes very high stress among them.

Table 7: Job Nature

Job Nature	Frequency	Percentage
Permanent	80	89%
Temporary	10	11%
Total	90	100%

The above analysis shows that 89% of the respondents' job mode is permanent. Rest of the respondents are working temporarily. But both the permanent and temporary employees experience stress very often.

STRESS CREATING ATTRIBUTES

Table 8: Very Long Working Hours

Stress Level	Frequency	Percentage
A lot	18	20%
Quite a bit	51	57%
A little	16	18%
Not at all	5	5%
Total	90	100%

The above table shows that more than 50% of the respondents have “quite a bit” of stress because of very long working hours. 20% of the respondents feel stress “A lot” and 18% have “A little” and only few have “No stress at all” even during long working hours. Major finding from the above table is that long working hours cause more stress.

Table 9: Poor Salary

Stress Level	Frequency	Percentage
A lot	39	44%
Quite a bit	36	40%
A little	12	13%
Not at all	3	3%
Total	90	100%

Salary plays a vital role in every organisation. The above table shows that 44% of respondents have more stress due to poor salary. This is because all private hospitals cannot offer reasonable salary to their employees. 40% of the respondents have quite a bit of stress.

Table 10: Job Insecurity

Stress Level	Frequency	Percentage
A lot	12	13%
Quite a bit	44	49%
A little	29	32%
Not at all	5	6%
Total	90	100%

The above table shows that 49% of the respondents feel quite a bit of stress due to job insecurity, 32% feel “A little” stress and 13% have “A lot” and 6% do not have stress at all. Hence it is understood that majority of the respondents feel “quite a bit” of stress due to insecurity in their job.

Table 11: Frequent Night Duty

Stress Level	Frequency	Percentage
A lot	27	30%
Quite a bit	25	28%
A little	25	28%
Not at all	13	14%
Total	90	100%

The above information clearly shows that more than half of the respondents are affected by stress because of frequent night duty. Only 14% of the respondents are not stressed at all by frequent night duty. The researchers found that frequent night duty creates more stress among the employees.

Table 12: Unfriendly Relationship with Colleagues and Co-Workers

Stress Level	Frequency	Percentage
A lot	6	7%
Quite a bit	27	30%
A little	40	44%
Not at all	17	19%
Total	90	100%

Good Relationship between the colleagues will create always a supportive attitude in any institution or organization. The above table just 7% of the respondents are suffering from stress “A lot”. 30% of the respondents have quite a bit of stress, 44% of the respondents have “A little” and 19% are not suffering from stress at all. Hence it is understood that the respondents suffer from more stress due to unfriendly relationships with colleagues and co-workers.

Table 13: Lack of Incentives for Overtime

Stress Level	Frequency	Percentage
A lot	34	38%
Quite a bit	26	29%
A little	25	28%
Not at all	5	5%
Total	90	100%

The above table shows that majority of the respondents (38%) were stressed due to lack of incentives for their overtime work. 5% of the respondents were not stressed even for working overtime, without any monetary benefit.

Table 14: Handling a Large Number of Patients Alone

Stress Level	Frequency	Percentage
A lot	6	7%
Quite a bit	35	39%
A little	38	42%
Not at all	11	12%
Total	90	100%

Lacking just allocation of work makes the workers feel over burdened in their work. That too in hospitals, handling number of patients alone is very difficult. The above table it shows that more than 1/3rd of the respondents feel stressed at “A little”. Just 7% of the respondents suffer from lot of stress. Hence, it is understood that majority of the respondents feel a little stressed due to handling large number of patients.

Table 15: Hospital Environment & Working Condition

Stress Level	Frequency	Percentage
A lot	2	2%
Quite a bit	25	28%
A little	38	42%
Not at all	25	28%
Total	90	100%

Good environment with hygienic atmosphere naturally creates a pleasant feeling in the minds of patients as well as workers. In above table it is shown that more than 1/4th of the respondents had a little level of stress. Hence, it is understood that just 2% of the respondents felt un-comfort due to lack of good environment and working conditions. So they had more stress.

Table 16: Role Ambiguity

Stress Level	Frequency	Percentage
A lot	2	2%
Quite a bit	17	19%
A little	30	33%
Not at all	41	46%
Total	90	100%

Normally, clarity is an essential part for studying and working people to accomplish their duty were when there is clarity in the work, it will be very easy to do. Here, the above table shows that majority (46%) of the respondents had clear cut idea of their work. So the level of stress is also very low.

Table 17: Imbalance in between Family Life and Work

Stress Level	Frequency	Percentage
A lot	21	23%
Quite a bit	43	48%
A little	24	27%
Not at all	2	2%
Total	90	100%

Basically working persons need to balance between the family life and the work. Based on the work, the balancing mode differs. Hard working persons have more pressure, so it is difficult to balance between the family life and the personal life. Hospital workers also face these types of problems. Here, the above table shows that more than 1/3rd of the respondents have high level of stress, due to imbalance between personal, family life and the work.

Table 18: Handling Patients after the Normal Working Hours

Stress Level	Frequency	Percentage
A lot	13	14%
Quite a bit	45	50%
A little	26	29%
Not at all	6	7%
Total	90	100%

In order to take care of every patient, the private hospital workers are taking care of patients even after the normal working hour, but this happens only in some critical situations. Here, the above table shows that half of the respondents are suffering from stress because they are obliged by their profession to handle patients after the normal working hours.

Coping Mechanism

Table 19: Switchover to Another Hospital

Statement	Frequency	Percentage
I always do this	5	6%
I sometimes do this	35	39%
I never do	50	55%
Total	90	100%

Nowadays alternatives are more in number. If a worker is dissatisfied a little in his/her job in private institution or organisation, he/she immediately switches over to any other job in any institution or organisation. But it is rare in medical field. Hence, the above table shows that half of the respondents never leave the job for another. But 39% have done this sometimes, due to some stress that they experienced in their professional life.

Table 20: Sharing Official Problem with Family Members

Statement	Frequency	Percentage
I never do	10	11%
I sometimes do this	37	41%
I always do this	43	48%
Total	90	100%

Discussing and sharing of problems with family members will reduce pressure and tension. Here, the table shows that majority (48%) of the respondents always shared any job related issues with their family members, which has reduced their level of stress. More than 1/3rd of the respondents seldom shared their job related issues with their family members.

Table 21: Building up Satisfactory Relationship with Superiors

Statement	Frequency	Percentage
I never do	7	8%
I sometimes do this	49	54%
I always do this	34	38%
Total	90	100%

A good relationship with the superiors will be a great support for the workers to feel peaceful to accomplish their work. But, maintaining good relationship with superiors is very difficult. Hence, it is understood from the above table that more than half of the respondents were able to build up satisfactory relationship with their superiors sometimes only. And more than 1/3rd of the respondents have always built up satisfactory relationship with their superiors.

Table 22: Compartmentalize Official Work and Home Life

Statement	Frequency	Percentage
I never do	5	6%
I sometimes do this	47	52%
I always do this	38	42%
Total	90	100%

Compartmentalizing work and home life will reduce the stress. The above table shows that more than half of the respondents were doing this sometimes and 42% of the respondents were balancing between work and personal life always. But 6% of the respondents were unable to balance between their work and home life due to work load and family pressure.

Table 23: Turn To Prayer or Spiritual Thoughts

Statement	Frequency	Percentage
I never do	7	8%
I sometimes do this	31	34%
I always do this	52	58%
Total	90	100%

Having faith on spiritual thoughts and prayers will bring peace and relief from stress. Here, the table shows that more than half of the respondents turned to prayer and follow spiritual thoughts to reduce their stress level. More than 1/3rd of the respondents are doing this sometimes.

Table 24: Tranquilizers / Stress Relief Medicines

Statement	Frequency	Percentage
I always do this	12	13%
I sometimes do this	54	60%
I never do	24	27%
Total	90	100%

Nowadays, taking stress relief medicines to reduce stress level is very common. But it is very dangerous to the health of the person, for example taking sleeping tablets, consuming alcohol, drug etc. Here, the above table shows that more than half of the respondents were taking stress relief medicines sometimes and 27% of the respondent have never done this. Hence, it is understood that to control or to forget the feeling of stress, the majority of the respondents were taking medicines.

Table 25: Create Patient Friendly Situation

Statement	Frequency	Percentage
I never do	7	8%
I sometimes do this	39	43%
I always do this	44	49%
Total	90	100%

Friendly approach towards patients will give immense happiness to the patients as well as the care taker. Patients need peace, happiness and confidence to improve their health. It is possible only if the hospital workers take care of the patients like a friend which will also reduces the stress of care taking persons i.e. workers in hospitals. Hence, the above table shows that majority (49%) of the respondents were trying to bring down their stress level through patient friendly situation.

Table 26: Patient Happiness

Statement	Frequency	Percentage
I never do	4	4%
I sometimes do this	40	45%
I always do this	46	51%
Total	90	100%

A genuine and polite worker in a hospital will certainly make their patients happy. Such type of personality will get stress relief by making their patients happy. They will treat their patients in a friendly way and give confidence to their patients. Hence, the above table shows that more than half of the respondents get stress relief by making their patients happy. 45% of the respondents have done this sometimes.

MAJOR FINDINGS

- Nearly half (44%) of the respondents were in the state of great stress due to poor salary.
- Nearly one third (30%) of the respondents were in stress due to frequent night duty.
- Nearly half (44%) of the respondents had a little stress due to unfriendly relationship with colleagues and co-workers.
- More than 1/3rd of the respondents had lot of stress due to lack of incentives for their overtime work.

- More than 1/3rd of the respondents had high level stress due to imbalance between work and family life.
- Most (48%) of the respondents discuss and share problems with their family members to feel relaxed from stress.
- More than half of the respondents turn to prayer or spiritual thoughts to relax themselves from heavy stress.
- Most of the respondents were taking stress relief medicines sometimes for relaxation.
- Majority (51%) of the respondents tried to get job satisfaction by making the patients happy.

SUGGESTIONS

- Hospitals need to evaluate and understand and fulfill the employees' expectations in reference to the work load and stress, for the better accomplishment of their work.
- The management should solve the problems of the employees in the beginning stage itself and adhere to avoid problems between them and the employees.

CONCLUSIONS

This research work certainly will help to understand the level of job stress of the employees working in Private Hospitals in Vaniyambadi. It also helps to know the dissatisfaction of the employees at various levels and for various reasons which are the causes of stress, especially in medical field. The researchers were able to bring out the main findings that may help the managements to know the different causes and the levels of job stress and also the environmental factors and physical and psychological changes related to stress among the private hospitals employees. The researchers would like to conclude that having done this work with lot of satisfaction and hope brought out the Findings and Suggestions which would help the private hospitals to know the symptoms of stress and find ways and means to prevent it. And also it will be of great help to the management to adopt stress management programmes and techniques, in order to help the employees for the better accomplishment of the job.

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