

WORK PLACE STRESS AMONG THE LADY HEALTH WORKERS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS FROM PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Workplace stress increases the incident rate of mental disorders. In coming next 20 years, depression will be the on the second top most disorder throughout the globe. Workplace stress affects the productivity of the work too. It is rising day by day due to various factors like, environmental, biological changes, living style etc. Depression weakens the immune which can affect the normal physiology of the human. Lady health workers or Community health workers are the backbone for the health of the community throughout globe. Very few governments have taken steps to prevent them from work stress. Stress caused by the stressors; which can be internal or external. In communities, a lady is appointed to work for the health promotion with different nomenclature of the post i.e. Lady Health worker, Community Health Worker, Lady Health Visitor, Community Health Visitor, Public Health Nurse etc

Key words: Workplace, Lady Health Workers, Primary Health Worker, Community, Stress, Primary Health Care

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INTRODUCTION

World Health organization (WHO) was established to work for the promotion and propagation of health. WHO has introduced various programs throughout the globe for the prevention of disease, promotion of health and prolonging of life in the Sub-continent. National program of Family planning and Primary Health program (NFP&PHP) was introduced, in which Lady Health Workers (LHWs) program was introduced for provision of health services to mothers and child at community level¹. Health professionals frequently suffer from stress owing to the characteristics and working conditions in the hospitals and fields and pressure of the work is directly proportional to productivity². People who are stressed are often tense, anxious, distressed and depressed even as most of them cannot cope while the environment. Stress at workplace tremendously effects work³. Research has shown

that LHW is a high-risk occupation in respect of stress-related disorders like depression etc. Stress can reduce the hopeful events of the life, leads to hypertension, cardiac problems, weaken immunity, contribute to addiction, unhappiness, irritability and reduce the overall status of behavior, cognitive and physiological well being⁴.

EPIDEMIOLOGY OF STRESS

There has been almost 100% rise in the incident of mental disorder, particularly stress and depression. In the country over the past 10 years, mainly due to the personal insecurity, poverty, illiteracy, inflation and ram shackle power supply⁵.

DIFFERENT TYPES STRESS

Stress can be caused by good and bad experiences. Stress hormones are present in the human body in the blood by releasing chemical substances.

Following are the different types of Stress:

- Eustress (Positive Stress)
- Distress (Negative Stress)
 - o Acute Stress
 - o Episodic Stress
 - o Chronic Stress
- Physical Stress
- Due to bio-chemical Stress
- Mental Stress
- Natural Stress

CAUSES OF STRESS

Job dissatisfaction, overworked, big responsibility, job insecurity, Job harassment, retirement, examination, new responsibility, Financial crisis, Severe illness, chronic disease, cancer, pregnancy, abortion, cardiac disease etc, Death of the beloved, Migration, Heavy voices, Interpersonal problems (relationship break, divorce, separation etc), Emotional problems (anxiety, grief, guilt, insomnia), Traumatic events (rape, robbery, violence, instability etc), Fear and phobia, Unrealistic/perfectionism, Rigid thinking / lack of flexibility and Sexual, physical or emotional abuse etc.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

American study conducted in which stress signifies as pervasive in nature. One fourth (1/4) of the employee population of the United States reported as victim of the top stressed in their work life, among them 26 - 52% of employee reported as moderate to high level of work stress. Meanwhile, 75% employees believe they are more in stress than earlier¹.

Social factors like death, divorce, relationship ending etc and financial events like being attack, crisis and robberies are the major factors leading to the stress⁶.

Cross sectional study conducted on the 388 nurses professionals through the self reported inventory, in which descriptive statistics analyzed by applying univariate and multi-variate and study report indicated that there is a significance association with being a technician of the nursing or auxiliary, working in the position for more than

15 years, having low social support with 3.84, 2.25 and 4.79 times more chances of being placed in the high train job quadrant⁶.

Study conducted in India in which negative correlation reported in comparison to variable variables like occupational stress, job satisfaction, old, professional education, years of job experience. Specific measures to reduce stress of nurse associated with compensation and independence will be helpful to improve performance of the nurses. Respondents were nurses in which maximum 88% nurses were working as staff nurses, 54% were in group of 21 - 30 years, 86% were female in sex, among them 57% were married, whereas among them 45% having no child, among them 60% nurses were with professional qualification of RGNM, 51% were having below 5 years of experience, 68% belong to the nuclear family with maximum 35% having more than three dependant members in their family. Majority of the nurses enlisted their stress and causes categories as work load stress reported 59%, conflict with doctors 49%, frequent occurrence of stress associated with uncertainty by concerning treatment 49% and dealing with patient and families 48%⁷.

It is refined in the research conducted among the oncology-nurses that role ambiguity and role conflict increase burn out under risky and challenging workplace conditions and over load of work causes the individual to become depersonalized and burned out decrease in many dimensions⁸.

Job stress referred as negative emotive and physical responses occurs when role conflict initiated. Physical, chemical and biological risks are the main factors among them in the working environment. WHO called it epidemic, The International Organization of Labor lobbed as it carries negative impact on the national gross production⁹. Workplace environment, organizational factors and utilization of EAPs are the workplace stressors¹⁰.

Positive correlation reported in a study conducted in between the load of primary mediators and old,

the presence of chronic diseases, place of work and female gender¹¹.

Negative correlation reported in a study conducted in the Egypt in between nature contact and stress and general health complaints. The result indicated that as workday contact increased perceived stress and generalized health complaints decreased¹².

Workload study reported that role conflict and inadequate monetary rewards are the main cause of stress among the workers working in the higher education sector. It distracts the work performance and reduces the work productivity of the organization. It is well quoted in the study that it is not possible to lead your free life in the organization without having any load or stress, such cannot be eliminated or diminished but can be minimized¹³. Conducted study in Peshawar as reported that 64.4% respondents were satisfied with their choice of career, among them 78% thought they had adequate knowledge to practice independently, 47.7% thought that their life in this profession will be stressful¹⁴.

University of Management Science and Technology Lahore conducted a study over the population of randomly 100 sampling of the faculty through the self administrated question-naire. Surprisingly stress of the faculty indicated by the unhappy emotional expressions e.g. frustration, tension, anger, nervousness and depression. The result reported that the performance of happy faculty of the university is better than successful faculty. In the faculty 7.5% reported low level of stress, 71.67% moderate level of stress and 20.83% high level of stress. In the study it is reported that respondents have a moderate level of stress based on their reported stress perceptions. In comparison to Americans, the people of the Pakistan have a significantly higher level of stress which may be due to the economical and cultural variations of the countries¹⁵.

Study conducted in Nawab Shah City among the school children in whom factors have been identified as perception of stress, interpersonal

conflicts, coping response and prior knowledge of puberty and cultural norms for handling stress. Environmental, social and personal factors have been identified. High prevalence rate of stress and behavioral disorders is present in the city unfortunately, country have remained a fairly neglected area of research¹⁶.

Another study conducted in Lahore in undergraduate students in which a positive correlation have been shown with old. Financial factor for students are less influencing¹⁷. Social factors like death, divorce, relationship ending etc and financial events like being attack, crisis and robberies are the major factors leading to the stress¹⁸. Positive association has been shown in between the work related musculoskeletal disorders, quality of life and workplace stress¹⁹.

Workload consists of three elements¹. Role overload². Role distance³. Role stagnation, Workplace stress means increase in occupational medicine like sprain, bruises, injuries, cuts, peripheral nervous system disorders, burn and hernia etc²⁰.

Previous studies conducted on nurses stress level report that experience of work stress on nurses distracts the quality of work and their lives. Even they increase minor psychiatric morbidity rates. Depression and stress may lead to the physical ailments as well as creating musculoskeletal problems. Still few studies are still attempting to measure the stress level of the nurses in the workplace environment²¹.

Workplace stress will have serious impact on the health of the individual as well as on job performance. It may have negative impact on health by variety of means like physiologically, psychologically and behavioral alterations. No intervention on the etiology of work stress can lead to high level of failure of quality performance in the organization. Such ignorance on solution of the problems impacting on the individual life, organization generatively, societies' growth, country's economy and even mankind suffers. Distress experiences by the employee have negative consequences on their personal life,

their relationship with the other family members, peer group, and where they are serving. Such networking effects from simple to complex might damage various entities. For example stress of the individual psychologically displace to the other member of the family and even surrounding which is the leading cause of the breaking of the relationship and thus results decrease in organization performance decreases. Such chain mechanism of stress affecting the quality of organization performance if handled will lead to the development of a whole society for their development²².

Mozhdeh S, Sabet B, Irani M, Hajian E and Malbousizadeh conducted research in Iran in which 44.4% (93 subjects) had low stress level, 55.1% (118 subjects) had moderate stress level and 0.5% (5 subjects) had severe stress level. Negative correlation was reported in between job stress and job performance in study. There was no association found with stress and demographical information⁹. Above study refers to the population of 93 dentists who participated and reported the most common cause of stress as maintaining high level of concentration while working (65.6%), time pressure stress (64.5%), concern over their ability to deliver dental services in future (60.2%), and rising costs (59.1%). No significance relationships between stress and gender, stress and old, stress and workplace or working hours per week was noted. There was a significant correlation between general stress scores and years of job experience and number of patients treated daily. The most common methods for coping with stress were resting 71.0%, sports 45.2% and entertainment 43.0%. Most dentists have been reported to cope stress after conduction of the stress management module nearby 89.7%²³.

Managing stress or Coping mechanism enables the employee to work hard and even their organization regaining their productivity as earlier. Many organizations are working without any break such are not called re-engineering of their productivity but they are doing best for their satisfaction²⁴. Stress affects the management

style among the staff nurses and nursing managers when it was examined in the study of stress and burn out²⁵.

Work motivation is the major route which is helping in cope mechanism in workplace stress. Cognitive theory of stress and coping stress is the interaction between individual and environment. This theory suggests that when demands from the environment exceed than available resources in result stress erupt²⁶.

Nursing profession is highly stressful, which leading to the tiredness, harsh behavior, anxiety, hypertension, lack of confidence, lack of job satisfaction and decreases the efficacy. According to the studies it leads the nurses to depression, isolation from patients, absence and decrease of their qualification²⁷.

Study conducted in UAE on nurses in which sample of 216 taken and resulted as 44.4% had low stress level, 55.1% had moderate stress, and 0.5% had a high stress level²⁸. Study conducted among the Public and Private teachers of AJK on stress. Stress is dynamic in nature depends upon the perception of the individual and definitely it alters the performance of the individual²⁹.

Study conducted among the four universities of Punjab (Pakistan) on teachers concerned with the coping mechanism how they are? Few recommendations have been listed among them he must be clarify to his personal goals, must having positive thinking, exercise and training of managing stress must be introduced by the authority³⁰. Stress has been considered as stimulus of consequences or response. Excessive stress can leads to failure in physical and psychological well being in results behavior changes occur in the individual³¹.

According to the Ruggiero stress could be expressed to variable of work shifting, which can be both physically and mentally. Studies examining job stress can be categorized into two groups: to those who are being examined their characteristics that are intrinsic to the job related,

such as demands of the job and their control, and those that examine to relation with organizational and the environmental conditions of work, such as work procedures or materials and instruments. The number of studies which has been examined the influence of job characteristics of organizational and environmental conditions of work. Studies conducted among the nurses regarding their stress, it revealed that job characteristics are predictive of job satisfaction, as well as of psychological and physical distress and even burnout³².

Two major stressors are time pressure due to deadline of work and unclear role³³. Study conducted in which it is exposed that during working life, including bites, scratches, and other trauma from animals, needle sticks, injuries and other disorders causes the workplace stress including psycho social support. Pakistan is too in poor health indicators in terms of maternal and child health. In such conditions Alma Ata declaration remained unfruitful but Government of Pakistan with sponsorship from WHO, launched a community health workers program known as National Program for Family Planning and Primary Health Care (FP&PHC) in 1994¹.

CONCLUSION

With reference to above mentioned review, the following recommendations can be made for the policy makers, stake holders and managers with regard to the concerned of LHWs. Following recommendations should be kept in mind at organizing, planning and implementation at any managerial level. Recommendations are likely suggested to provide free stress environment. The recommendations are as follows;

- To cope, stress management trainings should be introduced
- Job pressure should be managed through improving problematic administrative through provision of the handsome salaries, incentives etc
- Evaluation of work stress and job performance should be monitored on regular or frequent basis
- Procedural interventions must be applied to

prevent from bad consequences

- High Job motivational policy must be introduced

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2	Sehrish Noor	Critical revision of the article for important intellectual content,	
3	Zubida Chandio	Conception and design	
4	Tasleem Akhter	Drafting of the article.	