

A Study on Job Stress and Related Factors among Medical Professionals With Reference To Medical Professionals in Ernakulam, Kerala

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Abstract: *Stress refers to the strain an individual is subject to, from the conflict between his/her external environment and him/her leading to emotional and physical tension. In this fast paced world, it is impossible to live without stress, whether one is a student or a working adult. There are both positive and negative stresses, depending on each individual's unique perception of the tension between the two forces. This study on stress gives a detailed analysis of what stress is and also how stress has been defined. The researcher aims to check the degree of stress undergone by the employees in the medical sector and the relation between the various factors leading to stress and job stress. Medical practice is stressful. This is because medical personnel must respond to the needs of patients and families very promptly and patiently. However, medical knowledge and procedures usually involve limitations and uncertainties. Even a small medical error or mistake may prove to be costly and harmful to a patient's life and sometimes, irreversible. Moreover, night work, shift work and long working hours are also very common in medical profession. These factors make practicing the profession complex and the job stressful.*

Key Words: *Job stress, Medical, Peer pressure, Financial stability*

I. Introduction

Stress is defined as an adaptive response to an external situation that results in physical, psychological or behavioral deviations among organizational participants. Work stress may be manifested itself in both positive and negative ways. When the stress level in the organization goes up, it affects the participants and the organization. Therefore, it is necessary to find a suitable way of containing it. The success of an organization or an institution is shaped by the manpower it has on its rolls. The organization needs the capabilities of human power in almost all areas. The current study of work related stress by the researcher helps to know how far the organization environment is stressful to the employees and also about the effects of stress on doctors and nurses and to identify their coping strategies to manage stress. Kerala boasts of a well-established and responsive healthcare sector and the medical fraternity from Kerala has won global recognition. The medical profession is seen as a divine service sector by the people of this "God's own country". It has many well-equipped hospitals, with competent doctors and para medical staff, across the state providing high quality medical care. They are committed to offer the most advanced diagnosis and treatment with a humane approach.

II. Literature review

Hodson, R. and Chamberlain, L.J, (2003) feel job stress is a problem for both workers and organizations. It undercuts meaning and joy in work, has negative health consequences, and reduces organizational effectiveness. Understanding the full range of determinants of job stress has been difficult, however, because in-depth information on both jobs and organizations is difficult to acquire. The analysis confirms the long-established importance of job autonomy as a positive factor in reducing stress. New findings include positive roles for organizational coherence and local ownership. Finally the effects of some job stressors are mediated by social involvement in the workplace, both through informal coworker relations and through more formal participation programs. Overall, organizational effects on stress are as significant as or more significant than job effects suggesting the importance of giving further attention to organizational characteristics as a less examined set of determinants of job stress.

Sheppard, M (1997) identified the effects of a stress-management programme in a high security government agency. 44 employees of a regional branch of a federal government agency volunteered to

participate in a 3-months stress management programme. After a series of pretests, the SS were randomly assigned to one of 2 groups. Transcendental Meditation (TM) or an education control designated "Corporate Stress Management" (CSM). After the 12 - week intervention period, and again after 3 years, SS were administered same test battery. The 3- months result revealed a reduction in anxiety and depression in the TM group. The 3- years result suggested a reduction in anxiety, depression and improved self-concept in the TM group. Mujtaba and McCartney (2007) state that research over the years has established this fact; the body and mind are consistently adjusting to 'balance 'and 'equilibration', the term used to indicate emotional balance, must be maintained. Any change or threat to equilibrium can cause either eustress or distress.

III. Research objective

The study aims at understanding the relationship between job stress and the major contributing factors.

IV. Research methodology

4.1 Population

The population includes the doctors and nurses in the major hospitals in Ernakulam district of Kerala.

4.2 Sample size

A sample of 60 was selected from the total population.

4.3 Sampling method

The samples for the survey were selected using stratified sampling. The study used stratified random sampling technique to procure a sample. Stratified sampling was one of the probability techniques used in order to ensure that various types of doctors were included in the sample. The population was stratified into: different departments and tried to select doctors and nurses from each department. And probability sampling was employed once the strata were identified. A sample size of 60 was selected from the target population using stratified random sampling technique where every doctor and nurse in each of the strata had a chance of being selected.

4.4 Data collection

4.4a Primary Data

The primary data were collected by using interview schedule method. This research tool makes it possible to clarify the questions so that the answers will have a greater degree of accuracy and clarity.

4.4b Secondary Data

Secondary data were collected from books, websites, management text books, economic surveys, Government reports, journals and periodicals.

4.5 Data analysis tools

Statistical tool SPSS was used for data analysis

V. Analysis

Hypothesis testing

5.1 Marital Status and Job Stress

H₀: There is no significant association between marital status and job stress

H₁: There exists a significant relation between marital status and job stress

Table 5.1 showing Marital status * Job stress

Marital Status	Level of Job stress					Total
	Not at all stressful	Low stress	Neither	Stressful	Extremely stressful	
Married	4	6	3	14	17	44
Unmarried	2	2	0	6	6	16
Total	6	8	3	20	23	60

(Source: Primary Data)

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.356 ^a	4	.042
N of Valid Cases	60		

Interpretation

Here, the chi-square ratio is .042 which is less than .05, so we reject H₀, which says there exists a significant relation between marital status and stress, and accept H₁. There exists a direct relation between job stress and marital status of employees in the health care sector. Stress is found to be more among the married people.

5.2 Family Life and Job Stress

H₀: There is no significant association between employee’s family life and job stress

H₁: There exists a significant relation between employee’s family life and job stress

Table 5.2 showing Time spent with family * Job stress

Do you get adequate time to spend with your family?	Level of Job Stress					Total
	Not at all stressful	Low stress	Neither	Stressful	Extremely stressful	
Strongly agree	0	0	1	0	1	2
Agree	1	2	1	1	2	7
Neither	0	0	1	4	1	6
Disagree	1	0	0	6	8	15
Strongly disagree	4	6	0	9	11	30
Total	6	8	3	20	23	60

(Source: Primary Data)

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.515 ^a	16	.041
N of Valid Cases	60		

Interpretation

Here, the chi-square ratio is .041 which is less than .05 so we reject H₀ which says there is no relation between employee’s family life and job stress. There exists a relation between employee’s family life and job stress. Stress is considerably less among employees who get more time with their family.

5.3 Financial Stability and Job Stress

H₀: There is no significant relation between financial stability and job stress

H₁: There exists a significant relation between financial stability and job stress

Table 5.3 showing Financial Stability * Job Stress

Are you financially stable?	Level of Job Stress					Total
	Not at all stressful	Low stress	Neither	Stressful	Extremely stressful	
Strongly agree	0	0	0	1	0	1
Agree	1	2	1	3	2	9
Neither	1	1	0	1	0	3
Disagree	2	2	1	6	9	20
Strongly disagree	2	3	1	9	12	27
Total	6	8	3	20	23	60

(Source: Primary Data)

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.760 ^a	16	.023
N of Valid Cases	60		

Interpretation

Here the chi-square ratio is .023 which is less than .05 so we reject H₀ which says there is no relation between financial stability and jobstress. When an employee turns financially unstable, his stress level will increase.

5.4 Peer Pressure and Job Stress

H₀: There is no significant relation between peer pressure and job stress

H₁: There exists a significant relation between peer pressure and job stress

Table 5.4 showing Peer Pressure * Job Stress

Do you feel pressure from other staff in your organization?	Level of Job Stress					Total
	Not at all stressful	Low stress	Neither	Stressful	Extremely stressful	
Strongly disagree	0	0	1	2	2	5
Disagree	2	1	1	4	3	11
Neither	2	2	0	4	2	10
Agree	2	3	1	6	8	20
Strongly agree	0	2	0	4	8	14
Total	6	8	3	20	23	60

(Source: Primary Data)

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.585 ^a	16	.032
N of Valid Cases	60		

Interpretation

Here the chi-square ratio is .032 which is less than .05 so we reject H_0 which postulates there is no significant relation between peer pressure and job stress. Employees facing the heat of peer pressure works under tremendous stress.

VI. Conclusion

The researcher used the study to analyze and understand the relation between the major causes of job stress and their nature of influence on job stress. The major factors studied were marital status of employees, family life, financial stability and peer pressure. The study unambiguously proved that there is a direct relation between marital status of employees, their family life, financial stability & peer pressure and job stress. Stress is found to be more among the married people than those who are single. It is quite normal that as employees begin to have more responsibilities at the personal level, it casts an adverse effect on their profession too. However, on a positive note, it is found that stress is considerably less among employees who get more time to spend with their family. Jovial environ at home does make the professional environ appeal more pleasant. It is the bread and butter issue that often takes one to work, so it not all amusing that when an employee turns financially stable and comfortable his stress level also reduces considerably. This is a competitive world and this makes everyone to strive hard for excellence in one's chosen profession. This leads to healthy competition among employees which in turn keeps the peer pressure always on the higher side. The natural corollary is that employees facing the heat of peer pressure works under tremendous stress as they try to prove themselves at every given opportunity. The study thus makes it clear that it is the humane side of an employee that needs greater care and attention while designing ways and strategies to contain and reduce job stress.

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