

Comperative Status of Stress and Well-Being among AYUSH & Other Medical Professionals

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Abstract: Modern medical workplace is a stressful place, it has a complex environment. Large number of external pressures always exist on the medical professionals, may it be increased clinical workload due to insufficient staff and resources in health system, lack of control over work-life balance, the demands of keeping pace with rapid developments in medical technology and knowledge, changes in the administration and regulations, dealing with emergencies, uncertainty and errors, patient consumerism and community expectations. Interaction with patients and their families, which often involves dealing with suffering and deaths in emotionally charged clinical situations, can drain the “reserves” of the doctors with repercussions on their personal and professional lives. Such experiences are in addition to the pressures experienced outside the workplace such as relationship and financial problems. Keeping in mind the vulnerability of doctors to Stress, Burnout, Psychological Wellbeing and Health Status; present study was designed. This study examines the pattern and extent of stress and burnout in male and female medical professionals and to see how it varies across the years of experience, type of affiliated organization.

Keywords: Stress, Well-being, Burnout, consumerism

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays life is going more stressful, especially among health care professionals. To increase the efficiency and effectiveness of health care delivery, this study among the health care professionals would be a great help. Medical professionals are qualified persons who deliver proper health care in a systematic way professionally to any individual in need. Stress is a consequence of the failure to adapt to change. It is, in medical terms, the consequences of distribution of homeostasis through physical or psychological stimuli. It is a condition that results when person environment transactions lead someone to perceive a discrepancy, whether real or not, between the demands of situation, on the one hand and, on the other, the resource of their biological, psychological or social systems.

Are doctors any different from the general working population? It may be surprising to lay people that not every doctor is happy in his or her professional life. Stress and burnout among health care professionals, including doctors and nurses, are among the highest of all professions. The prevalence of stress

among the general working population is around 18%, while among doctors it is 28%.

Other factors are fatigue; high demands on time interfering with doctors other responsibilities; work conflicting with doctors personal lives; dealing with emergencies; uncertainty and error; patient consumerism; increasing demands from patients; financial pressures; information overload; administration; and personality factors. It has been emphasized that stress levels are highest among doctors caring for terminally and chronically ill patients. Doctors also have to deal with stress from litigation threats.

The psychological well-being of a person refers to the wellness and stability of a person’s self. Ryff theory of psychological well-being have profound implications for assessing the well-being of individuals because of the knowledge of how individuals view themselves, their significant others and their society (Ryff, 1989, 1995). Well-being is a dynamic concept that includes subjective, social, and psychological dimensions as well as health-related behaviors.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study aims to examine the pattern and extent of stress and burnout in male and female medical professionals and to see how it varies across the years of experience, type of affiliated organization. It will also study whether the feeling of wellbeing and social support does affect general health and self-efficacy of the professionals.

The present research shall attempt to answer the following research questions:

- What shall be the pattern and extent of stress in male and female medical professionals?
- Shall the experience and extent of stress vary across experience and type of affiliated organization?
- Shall the feeling of wellbeing vary across gender, experience and type of affiliated organization of the medical professionals?

TOOLS & METHODOLOGY

Sample

The medical professionals (Allopathic and AYUSH) working in government hospitals or doing private practice or working in private hospitals were randomly selected for the study. Equal number of male (N=100) and female (N=100) doctors participated in the study.

A total number of two hundred (N=200) male and female doctors practicing in Government and Private Clinic/Hospital of Bhopal city, located in Central India participated in the study. Equal number of Male Doctors (N=100) and Female Doctors (N=100) were taken as sample from 5 plus years (N=100) and 10 plus years' experience (N=100). The broad range of medical professionals i.e. of Allopathic and Ayurvedic, Homoeopathic System of medicine were selected to participate in the present study. A 2 (type of practice) x 2 (levels of gender) x 2 (levels of experience) factorial design was used.

MEASURES

In the course of study following measures were prepared and used in the study. A brief description of the measures is described below.

Stress

The stress questionnaire was developed during the course of study. The questionnaire consists of 47 items including five dimensions- 1.patients, 2.Hospital/clinic, 3.Incentive, 4. Family and 5. Self. A brief description of all the dimensions is given below-

Patient-The first dimension Patient focus on their quarries related to their treatment & diagnosis.

Hospital/Clinic- The dimension hospital describes about nature of work, work environment, relation with their colleagues, time pressure.

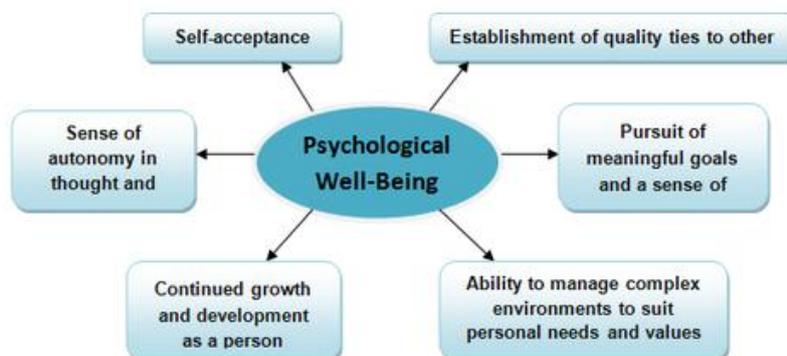
Incentives- the dimension include income, rewards, promotions and career growth.

Family- Family dimension have items related to spending quality time, lack of holidays, illness of family member and interruption in family life.

Self (Norms, Believes, Values) – The dimension of self describes norms, believes and values.

Psychological Well Being Scale

The Ryff's Scale of Psychological Well-Being is a theoretically grounded instrument that specifically focuses on measuring multiple facets of psychological well-being. These facets include the following: self-acceptance, the establishment of quality ties to other, a sense of autonomy in thought and action, the ability to manage complex environments to suit personal needs and values, the pursuit of meaningful goals and a sense of purpose in life, continued growth and development as a person. The scale measures psychological wellbeing of people in six different areas-Autonomy, Environmental mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations with others, Purpose in life, Self-Acceptance.



RESULT & DISCUSSION

With the help of standardized and self-developed questionnaire perceived responses of the participants on the above measures were obtained. The data obtained from the present study were coded and statistically analyzed with a view to address the research questions. Present study was planned to examine the pattern of Stress & Psychological Wellbeing of the Medical Professionals working either in government or private hospitals/clinics. Thus, in the study the influence of the type of organization, experience of work and gender on perceived stress, burnout, work family conflict, psychological wellbeing, self-efficacy, social support and general health was investigated. The scores on the measures were tabulated as per objectives of the study and accordingly subjected to statistical analysis.

A description of the result is illustrated here. The findings of the study indicated that male and female participants almost perceived the amount of stress equally. The present finding also indicated that span of work experiences of participants influenced the perception of stress. It was observed that the experienced medical professionals perceived little stress as compared to less experienced professionals. The findings of the study evidenced that organization and gender jointly influenced the perceived stress related to patients. It was observed that male participants working in government establishment indicated lowest stress as compared to participants working in private sector, where as reverse trend was observed for female practitioners working in private establishment.

The findings supported that experienced professional perceived less stress as compared to less experienced professionals. The present findings support that experienced professional deal these issues more strategically. Hence they perceive less stress.

Gender and experience interaction effect also indicated different trends in hospital. It was noted that the experienced professionals of government organization felt little interest as compared to their counterparts working in private organization. Surprisingly a reversed trend was observed for the less experienced participants.

The findings reported that less experienced participants showed higher stress (Incentive Dimension) as compared to more experienced participants. Similarly, the professionals of government sector showed the less amount of stress as compared to professionals of private organizations. Gender and experience interaction effect reflected that more experienced participants showed little stress as compared to less experienced participants.

The interaction of gender with organization indicated interesting trend. Male participants of private and female participants of government organization displayed higher stress due to incentive factor as compared to their counterparts' participants from government and private organization.

Present research indicated that less experienced professionals perceived higher family stress as compared to more experienced professionals. Similarly the professionals of private organization displayed higher stress as compared to professionals of government organization. The other problems related to self, norms, values and belief are also responsible for occurrence of stress among the participants. It was observed that female participants were more worried about these problems as compared to male participants. Similarly less experienced participants were more influence by self-related factors as compared to experienced professionals. It appears that due to socialization pattern and lack of real life exposure female professionals become more sensitive and develops more stress as compared to their male counterparts. Overall a close look on the total stress score suggests that experience and the type of organization emerged as a contributing factor for perceived stress. It was also noted that the professionals of private sector indicated incidence of higher stress as compared to professionals of government organization.

In psychological wellbeing participants feelings were also studied. In the study psychological wellbeing was studied on six dimensions, namely-autonomy, self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life ,environmental mastery and positive relations with others.

A close look on the results obtained on autonomy dimension indicated that participants from government organization enjoyed better autonomy as compared to participants belonging to private sector. It was also observed that interaction of gender with organization and experienced jointly influence the perception of autonomy.

On the dimension of environmental mastery in the viewed that participants of government indicated more positively related as compared to participants of private sector. They viewed that they are able to control their environment in which they work. Participants from government sector and more experienced male participants were observed to enjoy higher autonomy which reflects that they are able to resist social pressure to think and act in certain ways and evaluate self by personal standards. On the other hand female working in private organization were observed to have less autonomy which shows they rely on others for making important judgment and decisions.

On the dimension of personal growth effect of gender, experience and organization was not significant. The interaction of gender and organization indicated significant impact on personal growth. Findings obtained on positive relation indicate that experienced participants showed that incidence of more positive relation as compared to less experienced participants. Participants almost gave equal importance to purpose in life in all five dimensions.

Only interaction of experience and organization indicated a different pattern. Scores obtained on the dimension of self-acceptance indicated that the experienced participants were more confident and positive about themselves to less experienced participants. Interestingly it was also noted that female participants of private organization perceived them self in more positive way as compared to government participants. Whereas the male participants of government organization indicated positive response about self as compared to male participants of private organization.

IMPLICATIONS

- Following implications can be considered by the profession and the stakeholders (the government and professional associations)-
- The department of health can appoint Chief Psychological Officer, (as they have the CMO) for psychological interventions for doctors and other paramedical staff.
- Promote good health and the adoption of a healthy lifestyle throughout their medical training and career.
- Ensure access to confidential and high-quality medical and health services.
- Establish professional debriefing, support and mentorship.
- Identify internal and/or external stress factors contributing to, and recognise the warning signs and behaviour patterns of poor health.
- Promote access to early and expert assistance from professional services and providers.
- Incorporate life skills such as stress and time management into continuing medical education.
- Establish clear referral pathways for doctors and medical students in need of assistance.
- Take responsibility for their own physical and psychological health.
- Ensure they have all relevant evidence-based preventative health.
- Ensure all appropriate insurances are in place to support them through illness.
- Incorporate regular leave, good nutrition, exercise, leisure, spirituality and family time into a healthy and balanced lifestyle.

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