

## Perceived Workplace Stressors among Nurses, Working In Tertiary Care Hospitals: A Perspective of Nurses

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### **Abstract:**

*Nursing is a stressful profession by nature because a nurse faces a large number of stressful situations during hospital working. The objective of the present study was to explore the factors contributing to work related stress among nurses. A cross-sectional descriptive study design was used and data was collected by means of a self-administered, structured questionnaire. The study participants were 155 (nurses) from two tertiary care hospitals. Non probability purposive sampling technique was used and data were analyzed by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version-20. Major contributing factors of stress among nurses were high workload, shortage of staff, a task beyond competence, unrealistic high expectations of seniors, and lack of adequate skill training. Work related stressors should be minimized for better patient care outcomes, optimize work efficiency and increase job satisfaction among nurses. Key Words: work related to stress, workload. Stressor, stress*

**Keywords:** Workplace Stressors

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Stress is the body's natural reaction to a specific situation that may affect the mental and physical life of an individual. However, it is a subjective experience, which has no exact meaning and is understood differently by different people. Stress may occur in a broad range in workplace settings [1]. Studies have documented a high prevalence of occupational stress among nurses [2].

Some stressors are consistently identified in literature including pressure associated with challenging demands of the work environment, having to complete multiple tasks which most of the time are not related to nurses' job description, unpredictability in staffing and scheduling are also contributing to boost stress in nurses[3], [4] Factors of occupational stress are clinical workload, organizational climate and enormous accountability, supervisory along with administrative role of nurses. All these factors can affect a person's ability to work efficiently [5]. Studies are evident that a greater part of nurses experienced a different level of stress during their job [6]. Stress results in institutional ineptitude, behavior problems, enhancing nurses' turnover and absenteeism as well. [7]

Additionally, studies are evidence that a shortage of necessary resources in hospitals, scarcity of nurses, death and agony of patients and lack of personal health activities lead to increasing stress among nurses [8]. Time strain and inflexible attitude of supervisors or nurse managers are the significant starting place of stress directly related to the nursing profession [9]. Job stress is the most prevalent risk factor for employees' life. Nurses react to stress at the workplace in different ways, mainly reminiscent of professional interest, decreased job satisfaction, undesirable relationships with colleagues and absenteeism are evident in different studies [8], [12]

On the other hand, job satisfaction considered an influential aspect in the provision of high quality services and advanced nursing care in hospitals [10]. Due to the absenteeism of staff, shortage of nurses further deteriorate, as a result, the nurses who are working in hospitals are overburdened and prone to suffer from workplace stress. Intense workload and job stress are also related to lower job performance and satisfaction in hospitals. Moreover, the absence of a comprehensible job description makes nurses confused, deviates them from their main task and result in role conflict which leads to stress [11].

Nurses are overburdened due to their accountability for the treatment, patient safety, and rehabilitation; they not only assume the responsibility of caregivers but are administrators and managers of their patients as well. These manifold tasking roles throw them in to a significant amount of job place related stress between nursing staff [12].

**Objective of the study:**

To explore the factors contributing to work-related stress among nurses working in tertiary care hospitals.

**Research question:**

The main aim of this study is: What are the main factors contributing to work related stress amongst nurses working in tertiary care hospitals?

**METHODOLOGY:**

A cross- sectional (descriptive) Survey approach was used to conduct the study. This study was carried out in two public sector hospitals namely, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital and Mayo Hospital, Lahore. A total of 155 nurses participated in this study and a non-probability purposive sampling technique was used.

**Data collection tools:**

A self-administered questionnaire was adopted as a study instrument for data collection. Firstly, socio-demographic information was collected from study participants. There were 14 questions to assess factors contributing to work related stress among nurses.

**Data collection method:**

Data were collected after obtaining administrative permission from selected Hospitals. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants and informed consent was obtained from all participants who were willing to participate in the study. A self-administered questionnaire was filled by each participant. After collecting the completed responses by the respondents, data was kept in organized compartment. Confidentiality was ensured to participants of the study and ethical considerations were strictly stood for during the entire study.

**Data analysis:**

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis by computer software Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0.

**Section-I:** Analysis of demographic information of the respondents.

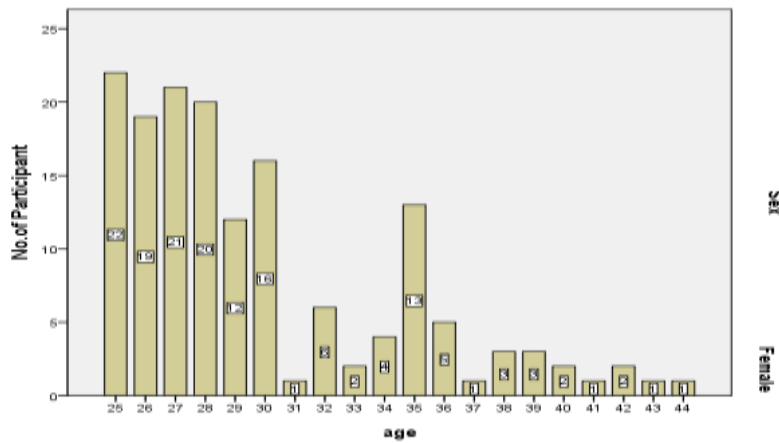
**Section-II:** Analysis of questionnaire to check the factors contributing to work related stress among nurses.

Data analysis was made by computing frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation and has been presented in the form of tables, bar and pie chart.

**RESULTS:**

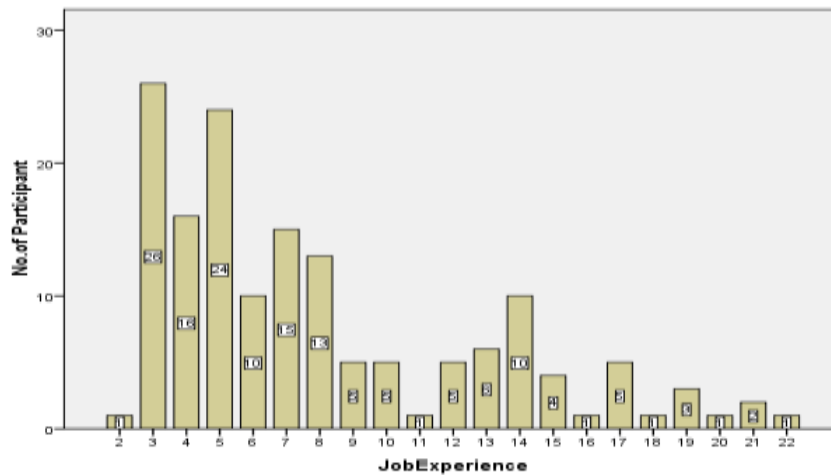
The results of section 1 were related to demographic data. Results of section II were related to factors contributing to work-related stress among nurses.

**Graph-1: Frequency distribution of age and sex:**



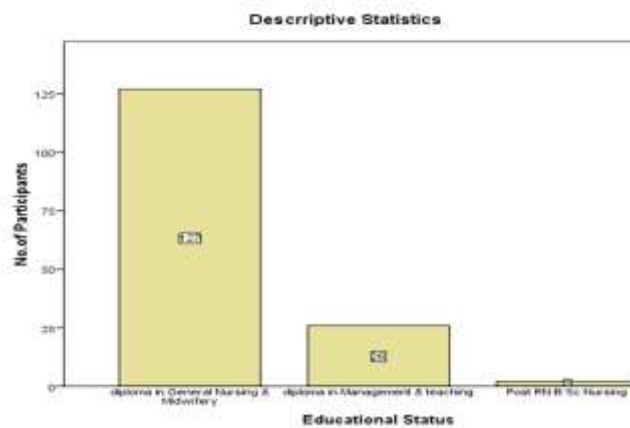
Graph 1, is representing the sex and age of study participants. 100% of the nurses were female and a large number of women (96%) were between the ages of 25- 30 years

**Graph-2: Frequency distribution of job experience:**



Graph No. 2: The graph is illustrating that among 155 nurses, 105(91%) nurses had 3 - 10 years of job experience.

**Graph-3: Frequency distribution of educational status:**



Graph 3 is demonstrating professional education, over four-fifths (82%) of the nurses were having a diploma in General Nursing & Midwifery. 17% of nurses have done a specialized diploma in management and teaching. Only 2 nurses were qualified as Post RN B.Sc. Nursing.

**TABLE-1.1: Frequency distribution of age and sex:**

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min.	Max.
Age	155	29.8	4.6	25.0	44.0
Experience	155	8.0	4.9	2.0	22.0

Table No. 1.1: Showed that mean age of nurses was  $29.8 \pm 4.6$  years and the average experience of the nurses was  $8 \pm 4.9$  years in different hospital settings.

**TABLE-1.2: Factors Contributing to Work-Related Stress among Nurses:**

**Key: 1, 1: Agree (A) 2: Undecided (U) 3: Disagree (D)**

S.No	Questions	AGREED	UNDECIDED	DISAGREED	Mean	SD
1	Do you feel mentally pressurized in the management of time when there is a deadline provided?	128	0	27	2.0	1.2
2	Do you believe that there is an excessive workload in your shift?	145	1	9	1.5	0.8
3	Do you think the tasks assigned to you during your duty hours are beyond your competence?	104	5	46	2.3	1.3
4	Do you think that others have unrealistic high expectations from your role?	116	7	32	2.1	1.2
5	Do you think that you have a capacity to cope with new situations?	143	0	12	1.6	1.0
6	Do you have awareness with regard to new technologies?	136	1	18	1.7	1.0
7	Do you have exposure to the deaths of patients?	103	47	0	1.4	0.7
8	Do you think that there is a staff shortage in your workplace?	150	0	5	1.3	0.8
9	Do you think there is lack of support from the senior staff in your workplace?	112	1	42	2.1	1.3
10	Do you think that there is a lack of essential resources at your place?	114	1	40	2.0	1.3
11	Do you think that you lack adequate specialized training for your present assignment?	98	3	54	2.4	1.4
12	Do you think that there is lack of your involvement in the planning and decision-making with regard to your work?	101	5	49	2.4	1.3
13	Do you think that you are tactfully handling difficult patients?	144	0	11	1.5	0.8
14	Do you think that you are competent in dealing with the relatives of the patients?	142	5	8	1.5	0.8

## DISCUSSION:

Nurses working in the whole of the world face a lot of challenges with multiple stressors [13], [6]. The first common factor in increasing stress in our nurses working in tertiary care hospitals is work overload, along with the shortage of staff. As the highest number of nurses (93%) believed that there is an excessive workload in their entire shift and almost all (97%) nurses reported that they often faced staff shortage in their workplace. Findings of some other studies are congruent with our results which prove that work overload is a major source of stress among nurses [2], [16]. The main reason behind workload in our settings is the absence of proper implementation of the nurse's job description which increases the workload despite sufficient number of staff nurses in our public sector hospital.

Our study proved that a vast number of nurses (82%) felt mentally pressurized in the management of time when there is a deadline provided. In contrast, a study conducted in Saudi Arabia in 2013 represented that 22% nurses suffering from such kind of circumstances [14]. However, a study was conducted in Brunei in 2007 [15] which exhibited that 45% nurses felt in stress due to not having enough time to complete their nursing task but among our study participants, the percentage is too high (82%) which may be due to lack of knowledge and deficient time management skills or maybe provision of multiple tasks at the same time. Additionally, 67% nurse thought that tasks assigned to them during their duty hours are beyond their competence. These findings are comparable with other studies [17]. This situation highlights the need that management must train them to supplement the competency level of our nurses.

Almost 80% of nurses agreed that they have a poor rapport with the manager, more than half of the nurses had conflict and uncertainty in the workplace lead to stress which causes to reduce self confidence and behavior problems among employees. These findings are in line with other studies conducted in Saudi Arabia and Indonesia [14], [22]. These results highlighted the problem which needs great attention by seniors and managers to decrease the work relationship gap among nurses in clinical areas for better work performance and improvement of behavior, among nurses.

A considerable number of nurses (75%) agreed that unrealistic high expectations from their role is also added up to their work related stress which indicates that nurses engaged in some clerical, medical and other health professional related work that is not directly related to patients' care. Studies had highlighted the fact that hospital organizational changes and people's own belief in the nurse's responsibility were documented as a major source of professional stress. [18]. The cultural background of nurses and patients may play an important role in influencing nurses' work environment and their ways of being seen.

A significant number of nurses (72%) agreed that there is a lack of support from the senior staff in their workplace. A study documented that 54% of nurses indicated it as a stressful event when there is a lack of support from their immediate supervisor [7]. In particular, the lack of support from nursing administration in today's complex clinical nursing environment is an immense cause of stress among nurses. A substantial number of nurses (73%) thought that there is a lack of essential resources at their workplace and there is a lack of adequate specialized training for their present assignments. Studies revealed the fact that they worked in such clinical areas for which they are not properly trained [20].

Above half of the nurses (64%) having the experience to deal with the deaths of patients during their clinical experience. Studies are evident that it causes great stress because it is very painful for a nurse to look at the patient at the time of death for which she was assigned to care [19]. Nurses may have a feeling of helplessness or regret in the case of patients who may fail to improve and die.

Two third of the nurses (65%) thought that there is a lack of their involvement in the planning and decision-making with regard to their work which leads to stress among nursing staff. According to a study in Brunei documented that around one- third agreed that their voice in planning policies and procedures for the hospital and unit where they work, was not regarded as what they want [7]. It showed that there is a huge gap between the administration of hospitals and the daily problems of the nursing services.

A significant number of nurses reported that they are not able to cope with new situations in clinical settings and most of the time, they remained unaware regarding new technology. In contrast, a vast number of nurses (93%) reported that they are tactfully handling difficult patients and they are competent enough to deal with fussy relatives of the patients. In contrast, a study reported less than half of the nurses were competent in this regard [21].

## CONCLUSION:

In nursing, everyone may experience different sorts of stressors while working in the hospital the most is work overload, shortage of staff, lack of skills, self confidence etc. So, it is the need of the contemporary era to minimize the stress at the workplace by improving the work environment which would be helpful in decreasing stress among nurses. This can be done by arranging training programs for the management of



stress which results from stressful activities in hospitals along with improving the relationship between nurses, supervisors and the health care team and create such an environment that is most supportive for nurses to minimize stress.

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