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## Stress-Induced During Initial Periods of Clinical Placement among Undergraduate Nursing Students of a Private Nursing College in Lahore

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### Abstract

*Nursing students undergoing initial period of clinical placement seem to have triggered a increased level of stress and has potential to lead to enormous challenges related to mental health. This study was aimed to determine stress and coping strategies during initial period of clinical rotations among undergraduate nursing students at a private nursing colleges in Lahore. A correlational cross-section study design was used. Total of 150 undergraduate nursing students participated in this research study and a self-administered questionnaire was used to collect the data. Majority of the participants were female, ages between 18 to 21 years. The summed up responses of the nursing students established that 68% responses indicate a strong possible association between stress and clinical placement while 15% of the students remained neutral while in their answers and 17 % disagreed to the statement. Therefore, it is recommended that nursing students must be trained in such a way to develop coping strategies to deal; with psychological triggers like stress to avoid its complications. Furthermore, mentors students must be accompanied by their mentors at all the time during clinical rotations.*

**Keywords:** Stress, mental health, clinical placement, coping strategies.

### INTRODUCTION

The nursing studies comprise of structured academic courses and clinical practices that complement each other. The theory component, piloted through lectures, case studies and directive conferences in classrooms which is supplemented by clinical training to provide students with prospects to hands on practice and improvise the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values imparted in tutorial rooms and laboratories (Ahmed & Mohammed, 2019). Nursing students experience stress in the course of practical opportunities and practice several coping strategies to deal with it (Bhurtun et al., 2019).

Those who are unable to cope up with these stimulants of stress may lead to psychological anguish and obstruct students' accomplishments of nursing career. The perceived prevalence rates of stress among medical students are projected to be about 14.3%–56% universally (Nebhinani et al., 2020). Recent scholars who studied about nursing students have found that students who lack the active coping techniques were vulnerable to develop psychiatric symptoms whenever facing these psychological triggers (Karaca et al, 2019).

Nursing studies have focused mainly on academic stress but it has been published that clinical component of nurse's training is more demanding (Onieva-Zafra et al., 2020). It can affect the individual's health and performance in academics, on the other hand it impacts the interaction with patients during clinical assignment and the quality of care provided to the patients (Aloufi et al, 2021). Peer mentoring is found very effective in dealing with these stressors at clinical placements and nursing students feel much more confident when guided by their mentors (Kachaturoff et al, 2020).

The objective of this study was to:

- Determine the possible relationship between stress and clinical placement.

## MATERIAL & METHODS

**Study design:** A correlational cross section study design was used.

**Study setting:** The study was conducted at a private nursing college in the provincial capital Lahore, Pakistan.

**Study population:** The nursing students were selected as study population.

**Sampling technique:** The sample was selected using simple random sampling technique.

**Sample size:** A total of 150 students were selected and this number was determined by using the probability formula below:

$N = \text{Total population}$

$N = \text{sample size}$

$E = \text{margin of error}$

$$N = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

**Inclusion criteria:** The participants meeting following criteria were included in the study:

- The participants must fall in the age group of 18-30 years.
- The participants must be studying undergraduate degree program of nursing.

**Exclusion criteria:** The subject meeting the following criteria were excluded from the study:

- The subjects studying nursing diploma program.
- Students having any disability or illness at the time of this study.

**Validity:** The questionnaire was validated by the faculty teaching Mental Health Nursing and Behavioral Psychology to assess if the questions can measure the expected outcome.

**Reliability:** A pilot study was conducted before initiating data collection to find out the reliability. Fifteen nursing students were requested to respond to the questionnaire and Cronbach alpha was calculated which came out to be 0.8.

**Data analysis:** The data was analyzed using the SPSS 22.0. The participants' demographic variables were categorized according to descriptive statistics and their responses were summed up to measure the outcome.

## RESULTS

Data was collected using the self-administered questionnaire to determine stress and coping strategies during clinical rotations among undergraduate nursing students of a private nursing colleges in Lahore. After selecting the sample from sampling frame, the students were approached and requested to complete the self-administered questionnaire.

Majority of the participants were female (74%) between 22 to 25 (61%) years studying in final year of nursing program (35%). Detailed results are illustrated in table 1 and can be found in appendix.

When asked to find out the impacts of stress on and due to clinical placements, most of the students answered positively. The detailed answers of the students are recorded in table 2 in appendix.

After calculating the descriptive statistics, the summed up responses of the nursing students established that 68% responses indicate a strong possible association between stress and clinical placement while 15% of the students remained neutral while in their answers and 17 % disagreed to the statement. The possible association is illustrated in the figure 1 attached in appendix.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study suggest a strong possibility that exposure to clinical placements during initial periods of nursing education can trigger stress among undergraduate nursing students. Therefore, it is recommended that nursing students must be trained in such a way to develop coping strategies to deal; with psychological triggers like stress to avoid its complications. Furthermore, mentors students must be accompanied by their mentors at all the time during clinical rotations. These concerns must be looked upon in prospective studies as it can lead to serious and devastating consequences for young students.

## LIMITATIONS

Our findings cannot be generalized for students enrolled on other degree programs. Moreover the self-administered questionnaire used also projected ta vulnerability of the results such that participants would respond in a generally attractive way. The coping strategies must be assessed but this study could not do so due to scarcity of time. This study could not attract ample resources. Therefore, this study must be replicated commercial level to yield more generalizable findings.

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## APPENDIX

Table 1: demographic factors of the subjects in research study (n=150)

	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	39	26
Female	111	74
<b>Age</b>		
18-21	58	39
22-25	91	61
26-29	0	0
29 to onward	0	0
<b>Year of study</b>		
First year	35	23.3
Second year	20	13.3
Third year	42	28.3
Final year	53	35.3

Table 2: Participants' responses to each question (n=150)

Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
First exposure with clinical practices cause stress in nursing students	12 (8%)	6 (4%)	18 (12%)	40 (27%)	74 (49%)
Change from classroom to clinical environment cause stress in nursing students	8 (5%)	3 (2%)	15 (10%)	63 (41%)	62 (41%)
Rude and inappropriate Behavior of senior staffs in clinical sites cause stress in students	3 (2%)	6 (4%)	25 (17%)	28 (25%)	77 (51%)
Stress cause emotional and psychological disturbance in nursing students	8 (5%)	10 (7%)	19 (13%)	42 (28%)	71 (47%)
Teacher instruction is different from one's expectation cause stress in nursing students	11 (7%)	14 (9%)	22 (15%)	45 (30%)	58 (39%)
Assignments and excessive workload is	8 (5%)	15 (10%)	28 (19%)	33 (22%)	66 (44%)

stressful for nursing students					
Feel stressed due to rapid change in patient health status	13 (9%)	13 (9%)	29 (20%)	35 (23%)	59 (39%)
Behavior of teachers in clinical cause stress in students	16 (11%)	14 (9%)	26 (17%)	42 (28%)	52 (35%)
Lack of communication skill cause stress in nursing students	13 (9%)	22 (14%)	28 (19%)	30 (21%)	55 (37%)
Discrepancy between the theory and clinical practices cause stress in nursing students	12 (8%)	23 (15%)	31 (21%)	30 (20%)	53 (35%)
<b>Total</b>	104 (7%)	150 (10%)	241 (15%)	388 (26%)	627 (42%)

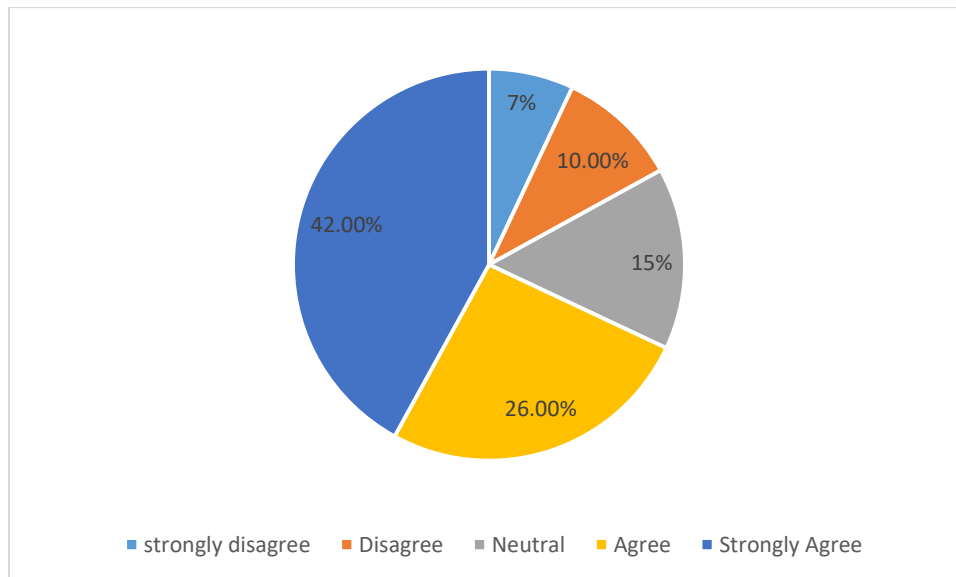


Fig. 1. Association between stress and clinical placement