

Handling Work-Life balance- An important perspective among doctors in government hospitals of Mumbai.

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Abstract: *Healthcare in India is one of the fastest growing sectors. As an industry it comprises of hospitals, medical devices, clinical trials, outsourcing, telemedicine, medical tourism, health insurance and medical equipment. India's competitive advantage is that of relatively large pool of well-trained medical professionals and relatively cost effective lifesaving clinical treatment in government hospitals. In today's competitive world, work culture in government hospitals has gone through a transition. Government hospital work culture has changed than before due to increase in population base especially for a city like Mumbai. In other words, today's resident medical doctor attends more patients per hour than earlier generation counterparts. As a result the number of stressors in their lives appears to be increasing. Work performance and quality of medical care administered to the patients can be compromised by over stressed doctors. In other words, stress can not only affect individual productivity but also hamper the organizational growth. Hence it is important to identify such stressors and act on the same. This will ensure work-life balance in the lives of the said doctors. The best way to deal with the same is to initiate stress management as a Human Resource policy in government hospitals of Mumbai. Through this paper attempt is made to resolve issues related with managing stress and increasing HR productivity of doctors at work place as well as at home. It suggests measures for government hospitals to nurture, retain and empower the doctors in the most efficient and effective manner without compromising on the personal front.*

Key Words: *Government Hospitals, Work-life balance, Work performance, HR policy, Stress management.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Healthcare in India has become one of the most fast growing sectors. This industry is fast paced in terms of contributing towards revenue and job opportunities. Government hospitals form a crucial part for rendering the health services and related infrastructure. India is recognized as the medical tourism hub in the world due to the low costs and quality service. The provisions for health services and related infrastructure of Mumbai are met through MCGM, State and Central Government. The doctors form the backbone of the health care industry. However owing to the booming population there always seems to be shortage of manpower in these hospitals. There is a vast difference in the type and kind of workload that the today's doctors have in comparison to their seniors. As a result the doctors working in these conditions are subjected to stress at all times. Besides, the very nature of the job can at times add on to the existing stress in the doctor's life. Medical profession accounts for the health of the people. If the profession is unhealthy, the question will be raised on the quality of the treatments offered to the people and its pattern. The presence of stress can be established by individual performance in organization. In other words, stress can not only affect individual productivity but

also hamper the organizational growth and can pose a risk to the patient's health as well. It is therefore important to identify the stressors in the life of the doctors so that the line of treatment is not compromised.

Stress is very common these days in each and every sector/organization and hospitals are not an exception. Stress can be caused due to internal and external factors. Thus in the life of the doctors, external factors can be environment, organizational culture, peers-subordinates etc. while the internal factors include personal and professional factors. These factors can have an impact on the physiological and psychological well-being of the doctors.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Around the world, occupational stress and its impact on work-life has been studied for better performance. Stress becomes detrimental when it is associated with pressures and the results are uncertain, unpredicted and important from the individual and organization's point of view. Health care employees are more prone to stress than any other profession due to the very nature of the work. Health care is the sector responsible for the health of the country. Besides, with the ever growing population and huge shortage of beds, it has a major opportunity for growth and expansion. Due to these reasons, stiff competition, demanding services, patients' expectations and government regulations are forcing doctors and hospitals to pressurized conditions and heavy stress.

In April 1998, Bruce Kirkcaldy et al, studied the German medical staff for the accident behavior and the correlation found with demographic and work related parameters showing quiet higher rate of stress. The demographic factors which are identified were distance from home and no of dependent and job related stress in the form of work climate and working hours etc. The doctors working for more than 48 hours and more show more driving accidents and stress as compared to the others who work less than 48 hours.

Siyong Wu et al (2007), tried to study the relationship between burnout and occupational stress among doctors. It was noted in the study that when the organization puts in efforts to combat stress, it not only prevents burnout but also increases the work efficiency of the doctors.

The paper by Hassan Daniel Aslam et al (2013) analyzes the stressors responsible for causing varied levels of stress among doctors and its direct impact on their performance. The said study is a comparative analysis between doctors of public and private hospitals of Pakistan. Working conditions, role overload, working in night shifts, sleep deprivation, the expectations and demands of the patients and their families and work load are the identified stressors. Besides, the study indicates higher presence of these stressors among the doctors in public hospitals.

The objective of the study by Al Mazrouei A. M et al (2015) was to assess the levels, sources and other related factors causing job-stress among physicians. It was noted in the study that apart from stressors like night shifts, workload, managerial responsibilities etc., there are socio-demographic factors that add on to the stress in doctors. These include marital status, presence of children, age, gender and living with family. All these factors directly impact the productivity of doctors at workplace.

Reider and Nina (April 2001), tried to study in one of their articles pointing towards the suicidal attempts of the medical students in Norway Medical College. The correlation of suicidal thoughts and attempts are directly linked with the job stress and personality traits. Suicidal ideation in medical school was predicted by lack of control, personality trait, single marital status, negative life events and mental distress (anxiety and depression). In the first postgraduate year, mental distress was the most important predictor, but before controlling for this variable, job stress, vulnerability (neuroticism), single status, and less working hours were independent predictors. It is also concluded that the level of suicidal thoughts was high, but the level of attempts was low.

Shanafelt TD et al (2012) studied the impact of burnout and job satisfaction. It was noted in their study that burnout can have a direct impact on work-life balance. Besides, doctors in specialty are more prone to stress than physicians.

The paper by Raymond (1996) professional work demands are exist into three categories as clinical related to medical practice, academic to update themselves or to be in higher education and administrative is the time management, relational aspects etc. The perceived stressors are also divided into four factors as clinical responsibility, timely demands, organizational constraints and personal confidence etc. The studies conclude that the self-reported data characterize and measure the consultants work demands and their role as potential stressors. They also help to form the strategies to reduce occupational stress in the practitioners.

Indian Scenario:

R. Laxminarayanan, Senior Administrative Officer at National Institute of Virology, Pune, India while handling his job has observed that the key components of the stress among doctors and medical practitioners. He believes that job stress today is inevitable and it is the gap of expectations of an individual employee with the organization's demands. It is always that the performance and the accuracy and innovative thinking that are hampered due to stress and its side effects. It also has a tremendous impact on the desired results and man days of the organization. Thus proving that stress is neither good for employees nor for employers.

Dr Shipra (2015) studied the life satisfaction and its relationship with organizational role stress (ORS) among the female doctors. The paper tests a strong and opposite correlation between the two factors. The study supplement has various role stresses and its emotional consequences manifested in terms of life satisfaction needed to be taken care by organization as well as family. There is a strong requirement that effective involvement is needed to judge the cause and effect relationship of stress to contribute effectively for the profession and quality of life. At the same time this can impact the performance of doctors at workplace.

In 2015, Aarti Sahastrabudhe et al had identified that the stress experienced in the tertiary hospitals in Mumbai city resident doctors is tremendous and emergency policy decisions are the most urgent requirements in today's scenario. The most common stressors in this study were long duty hours, poor accommodation and food, lack of social and family life, heavy workload and low stipend.

Khan Md. Moizuddin et al (2013) conducted a cross sectional study of Occupational stress among resident doctors. It was found in the two parts of medical students who are pursuing their post-graduation in clinical and preclinical fraternity, the stress scores were more in clinical doctors as compared to the pre-clinical resident doctors. Thereby suggesting training for resident doctors to handle stress and time management for the calm and balanced nature while treating the patients.

Irfana Baba (May 2012) observed while studying the stress among the doctors in India in the government hospitals that the stress among doctors is very high in the government hospitals. The factors of Inter Role Distance (IRD) stressor and resource inadequacy contribute more to the Organizational Role Stress. One of the major conclusions of the paper is that male doctors feel more stressful as compared to the female doctors. The stress is also directly proportional to the number of years of service in the organization. The paper suggests few facts in the government hospitals i.e. overload among senior doctors, at the same time doctors within the age band of 22-35 scored higher on stress scores as they cannot initially balance the organizational and non-organizational roles. They report twice in a week the night shift. They are at the learning phase and hence to gain excellence creates more stress for them.

Saha D et al in 2011 while understanding the job stress among healthcare staff, tries to identify the aspects of job stress among super specialty hospitals for the doctors and measures to de-stress them. The paper believes on proper workload management, job redesign and occupational health education lead to reduce the pressures on doctors. It directly correlates stress with the work performance of doctors.

Gitanjali Sharma, Dr.Rimjhim Gupta (2016) in the paper titled “Causes Of Occupational Stress Among Medical Practitioners Working In Public & Private Medical Colleges Of Udaipur” identify administration and management, work overload, interruptions and the job itself as major stressors for doctors. The Occupational stress is the result of work overload, increase in the number of patients handled, and health hazards due to the occupation, effort-reward imbalance and strong competition among the doctors.

Health care occupations are regarded as highly stressful and associated with higher rates of psychological distress than other occupations. People working in health care are exposed to a number of stressors, ranging from work overload, time pressures, and lack of role clarity to dealing with infectious diseases and difficult and ill, helpless patients. Such stressors can lead to physical and psychological symptoms, absenteeism, turnover, and medical errors. However, intense changes/interventions keeping in mind both organizational and doctors can successfully reduce stress at workplace. Although organizational changes/interventions are generally preferred, interventions that combine professional and personal components may have the highest probability of providing long-term benefits for the organizations as well as the doctors.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is exploratory and qualitative in nature. The secondary information is used for the analysis of the problem. Sources for the secondary data are originated from the various sources like medical journals, magazines, newspapers and relevant websites.

IV. OBJECTIVE OF STUDY

1. To identify the causes of stress for doctors.
2. To understand the impact of stress on performance of the doctors.
3. To suggest work-life balance measures to the doctors.

V. LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

This study is based on qualitative data. This data is collected from the research papers, journals, books, thesis and official documents of the hospitals and medical journals. The research findings are not tested using any statistical tools.

VI. SCOPE OF FUTURE RESEARCH

This study can be conducted with primary data collection method. For the same, interview and questionnaire methods can be for data collection. Further this data can be analyzed using statistical tools for accurate and precise results.

VII. SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Stress is an unavoidable feature of the lives of all human beings. It has a powerful impact on physical, psychological and social health of individuals. Doctors especially with their job role and responsibilities are more prone to occupational stress. It is primarily the duty of individual doctors to strike the right balance between their professional and personal lives. Hence a few self-help strategies can help overcome the stress. This can include regular exercising, monitoring the screen time, taking short breaks in between patients, healthy diet and most importantly having some family and/or “me” time. Regularly practicing a few of these can be the key for striking the right work-life balance.

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