

TO STUDY THE STRESS LEVEL OF PHARMACISTS WORKING IN PRIMARY HEALTH CENTRES IN CHHATTISGARH

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Abstract

Stress has become a major concern of the modern times as it can cause harm to employee's health and performance. Work related stress costs centres billions of dollars each year through sickness, turnover and absenteeism. So, it becomes necessary for every centre to know the level of stress and its consequences on the employee so as to overcome it. This study on stress on Pharmacists was conducted in Primary Health Centres to know the level of stress and its consequences faced by the Pharmacists and thus give suggestions to cope up with stress. The data was collected using a well-structured questionnaire which is breakdown into four sections namely, socio-demographic, employment information, physical health and sources work pressure & analyzed using MS Office Excel Version 16. Stress level is measured in Five-Point scale rating and Likert scale rating. The result of the study showed that the respondents were not prone to stress. A further study can be done on this topic taking various other factors into consideration. The study revealed that majority of the Pharmacists had similar response.

Keywords

Stress, Primary Health Centres, Pharmacists, Healthcare Pharmacists, Raipur

Introduction

One may be familiar with some other terms which are used synonymously because of their meaning being similar to stress. These terms are stress, strain, conflict and pressure. Matteson has defined Stress as "An adaptive response, mediated by individual characteristics and psychological processes that is consequence of any external action, situation, or event that places special physical and or psychological demand upon a person". A simplified statement may be – stress can be said to be an adaptive response to external factor which may result in physical, psychological or behavioral changes in an individual. Different occurrence of stress can be physical, psychological or behavioral deviation, individual's interaction with the

environment stimuli and also it can vary from temporary to long term period of time depending upon the individual's capability to tolerate stress. There are several signs and symptoms that you may notice when you are experiencing stress. These signs and symptoms fall into four categories: Feelings, Thoughts, Behavior, and Physiology. When you are under stress, you may experience one or more of the following. Both positive and negative events in one's life can be stressful. However, major life changes are the greatest contributors of stress for most people.

Stress can have negative effects on our health-either with direct physiological damage to their body, or with harmful behavioral effects. A partial list of diseases believed to be partially blamed on long term exposure to stress is coronary heart disease, hypertension, and kidney disease. During the last decade, chronic backaches, gastritis, migraine, headaches, cold & ulcers are had been linked the stress itself does not cause the illness but helps to bring it about by decreasing immunity. How do we know its stress causing many of our problems? In many parts of the world, where stress is a normal part of life, coronary heart disease expose to the stresses of modern society, they become as susceptible as anyone else. Other studies have shown that heart disease is linked to cholesterol levels which increase with stress, we know that smoking, alcohol consumption, kidney disorder, high salt intake & heredity, can all raise blood pressure, but factor in triggering the outset of hypertension. In one study of nine- to sixteen-year-olds, it was discovered that a routine act such as reading out loud in front of classmates caused significant elevations in blood pressure. Studies continues to show that its not only adult, but also children, who fall victim to hypertension as a direct result of stressful events in their lives. Skin problems such as eczema & rashes have been cured by using stress management techniques, since many skin diseases result from emotional stress. Until recently, most illness were attributed to thing like diet, heredity environment and lifestyle. Evidence now points in a new direction & links stress to a wide range of illness from headaches and ulcers & cancer many of these illnesses & diseases can be controlled by learning to change attitudes & control thought patterns, which help keep our immune system from working overtime. Managing stress is, without a doubt, one of the single most important elements in ensuring that defense is there & ready when it is needed the most.

Everyone is under some pressure in the workplace. Some external pressures can be a positive factor, helping us to be more productive. Some people actually thrive under short-term added pressure, and our bodies are designed to meet these short-term demands. Hormones including adrenaline are released to prepare us for a "fight or flight" response to demanding situations. However, excessive and prolonged stress can take its toll, producing a range of physical and emotional health problems which have come to be grouped as "work-related stress".

There is no single cause of work-related stress. While stress can be triggered by sudden, unexpected pressures, it is often the result of a combination of stressful factors which accumulate over time. Some people can become so used to the symptoms of excessive stress that it goes unnoticed to their detriment.

Most work-related stress is related to management of work, relationships at work, centres set-up and whether you feel you have power and control in your work.

The experience of stress is different for every person. Some people are affected more than others, so what is stressful for one person may not be stressful for another. It can how you have learned to respond to pressure. Work-related stress is a management issue and it is important for employers to recognise work-related stress as a significant health and safety issue. Government can and should take steps to ensure that Pharmacists are not subjected to unnecessary stress, including:

- Ensure a safe working environment.
- Make sure that everyone is properly trained for their job.
- De-stigmatize work-related stress by openly recognizing it as a genuine problem.
- Discuss issues and grievances with Pharmacists, and take appropriate action when possible.
- Devise a stress management policy in consultation with the Pharmacists.
- Encourage an environment where Pharmacists have more say over their duties, promotional prospects and safety.
- Organize to have a Human Resources Manager.
- Cut down on the need for overtime by reorganizing duties or employing extra staff.
- Take into account the personal lives of Pharmacists and recognize that the demands of home will sometimes clash with the demands of work.
- Seek advice from health professionals, if necessary.

Objectives

1. To study the factors of stress on the Pharmacists at Primary Health Centres, Chhattisgarh.
2. To give constructive suggestions to the government as how to minimize stress.

Methods and Methodology

The research design adopted for the project is descriptive research. This research was undertaken to study the level of stress of Pharmacists in Chhattisgarh.

A research design is purely a framework for a project that guides the collection and analysis of data. The main aim of such a design is to ensure that the required data are collected objectively, accurately and economically.

Sampling Design: Before undertaking the survey, the sampling unit, sample size and sampling procedure were determined. The sampling procedure undertaken for the research is Non-Probabilistic Convenience Sampling.

Sample Size: The total universe of Pharmacists working in Primary Health Centres are 1000, so for the research purpose the sample size taken is 120.

Data Collection Method: Research instrument: A well-structured questionnaire was used for collecting the primary data from the Pharmacists.

Statistical Measures Used: The different parameters under each area selected for the study has been asked to be rated by the respondents on a Five-Point scale rating and Likert scale rating. Analysis has been carried out by assigning scores to these ratings given by the respondents to the different parameters under each area.

Sources Of Data: Primary data: The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire targeted towards Pharmacists of Primary Health Centres, Chhattisgarh. A Structured questionnaire was designed covering close ended question, to study the factors which cause stress.

Secondary data: Information gathered from company manual, database, Internet & text books.

Data Collection and Analysis: A total of 120 questionnaire were distributed and collected over a period of one month. Response Rate of 100% with the complete answers and all necessary precaution were taken to ensure that there are no missing values. The data was analyzed using MS-office Excel Version 16.

Limitation: Limitation of this study are its use of self-reporting questionnaire, which rely on the honesty of those completing them and its cross-sectional design.

Result

The frequency table below indicates that the Primary Health Centres has more male Pharmacists as compared to female counterparts. As the table indicates that there are more of young Pharmacists i.e., in the age group of 18-35. The table indicates the marital status of the sample population in which majority of the Pharmacists are Single i.e., 71 Pharmacists, which includes 49 male and 22 females.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of Pharmacists Working in Primary Healthcare Centres of Chhattisgarh.

Socio-demographic characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-25	45	37.5%
	26-35	68	56.7%
	36-55	7	5.8%

	56+	0	0.0%
Gender	Male	78	65.0%
	Female	42	35.0%
Education	Under Graduate	0	0.0%
	Graduate	74	61.7%
	Post Graduate	46	38.3%
Marital Status	Married	49	40.8%
	Single	71	59.2%
	Divorced	0	0.0%
	Other	0	0.0%

The educational qualification of the sample population of 120 Pharmacists taken into consideration and it was found out that 74 were graduates while 46 are post graduates. Among the graduates 66% were male while 63% male were Post Graduates as compared to 34% & 37% of female Pharmacists.

Table 2. Frequency Table for Employment Information and its various dimensions.

Employment Information		Frequency	Percentage
Communication and the way information flows in the centres	Completely dissatisfied	7	5.8%
	Moderately dissatisfied	18	15.0%
	Neutral	38	31.7%
	Moderate satisfied	41	34.2%
	Completely satisfied	16	13.3%
The relationship you have with other people at work	Completely dissatisfied	0	0.0%
	Moderately dissatisfied	0	0.0%
	Neutral	28	23.3%
	Moderate satisfied	42	35.0%
	Completely satisfied	50	41.7%
The degree to which you feel motivated at work by your job	Completely dissatisfied	2	1.7%
	Moderately dissatisfied	16	13.3%
	Neutral	23	19.2%
	Moderate satisfied	38	31.7%
	Completely satisfied	41	34.2%
The way in which conflicts are generally resolved	Completely dissatisfied	5	4.2%
	Moderately dissatisfied	14	11.7%
	Neutral	37	30.8%
	Moderate satisfied	47	39.2%
	Completely satisfied	17	14.2%
The kind of tasks and work you are required to perform	Completely dissatisfied	3	2.5%
	Moderately dissatisfied	4	3.3%

	Neutral	27	22.5%
	Moderate satisfied	47	39.2%
	Completely satisfied	39	32.5%
The amount of work you are given (whether too much or too little)	Completely dissatisfied	11	9.2%
	Moderately dissatisfied	12	10.0%
	Neutral	35	29.2%
	Moderate satisfied	38	31.7%
	Completely satisfied	24	20.0%
The design/ shape of the organisation	Completely dissatisfied	5	4.2%
	Moderately dissatisfied	24	20.0%
	Neutral	31	25.8%
	Moderate satisfied	31	25.8%
	Completely satisfied	29	24.2%
Your level of salary relative to your experience, training and education	Completely dissatisfied	31	25.8%
	Moderately dissatisfied	29	24.2%
	Neutral	14	11.7%
	Moderate satisfied	18	15.0%
	Completely satisfied	28	23.3%
The amount of flexibility/ freedom you have in your job	Completely dissatisfied	1	0.8%
	Moderately dissatisfied	8	6.7%
	Neutral	32	26.7%
	Moderate satisfied	41	34.2%
	Completely satisfied	38	31.7%
Work environment	Completely dissatisfied	0	0.0%
	Moderately dissatisfied	6	5.0%
	Neutral	23	19.2%
	Moderate satisfied	48	40.0%
	Completely satisfied	43	35.8%

Interpretation: Frequency table indicates the satisfaction level of Pharmacists towards the communication process adopted in the centres. It was encouraging to find out that 41 Pharmacists are moderately satisfied and 38 Pharmacists are neutral regarding the communication flow in the centres. But there were minor cases where Pharmacists were dissatisfied with the process. Hence we can conclude that communication flow in the centres is good and does not affect the efficiency of the Pharmacists. Interpersonal Relationship is an integral part of an centres. When relationship among the Pharmacists are in good terms it reflects their performance and help the centres to achieve their target efficiently and effectively. At Primary Health Centres it was encouraging to know that the Pharmacists share a good rapport with each other. None of the Pharmacists were dissatisfied and it was noted that more than 50% of the Pharmacists were highly satisfied with their co-workers. Motivation is another factor that leads to employee performance. Centres should always look at different ways of motivating an employee so that the best can be derived out of him/her. The sample population taken for the study were highly satisfied with the motivation given to them by the centres

to improve their performance. But 15% of the population think that more work can be done in this field by the management.

The Pharmacists had a mixed feeling about the way the government officers handled the conflicts arising in the centres. Even though a good inter personal relationship exists in the centres still some odd conflicts do arise, for which the officers are not prepared for. Hence, it is creating dissatisfaction among Pharmacists.

Providing challenging work to Pharmacists improve their efficiency and effectiveness. At Primary Health Centres the government has made sure that the work task provided to its Pharmacists are challenging and achievable. Even the Pharmacists agree with this fact as it can be seen in the table above, more than 90% of Pharmacists had a positive reaction towards the satisfaction level of doing their task.

Pharmacists have a mixed reaction towards the amount of workload. As we can see the frequency is almost equally distributed.

Majority of Pharmacists are satisfied with the centres structure at Chhattisgarh and thinks there is a scope for growth for the Pharmacists.

Salary is an reward for the service rendered by the employee to the centres. The government should consider certain factors such as experience, amount of work, responsibility and accountability of an employee before setting his pay check. The pay check should justify the work done by him. Only 22% of Pharmacists feel that they are paid reasonable salary according to their experience and job profile. While a high percentage i.e., 62% of Pharmacists feel they are paid less.

The Pharmacists of Primary Health Centres are satisfied with their job as they consider it fairly flexible according to the situation.

Work Environment is a kind of motivational factor which reflects the performance of an employee. The better the environment, the better the Pharmacists perform. The sample population agreed to the fact that the work environment provided by the centres is highly satisfactory.

Table 3. Frequency Table for Physical Health

Physical Health		Frequency	Percentage
Inability to get to sleep or stay asleep	Always	0	0.0%
	Often	13	10.8%
	Sometime	42	35.0%
	Rarely	38	31.7%
	Never	27	22.5%
Headaches	Always	0	0.0%
	Often	19	15.8%
	Sometime	43	35.8%
	Rarely	41	34.2%

	Never	17	14.2%
Indigestion or sickness	Always	1	0.8%
	Often	9	7.5%
	Sometime	19	15.8%
	Rarely	51	42.5%
	Never	40	33.3%
Feeling unaccountably fatigued or exhausted	Always	1	0.8%
	Often	3	2.5%
	Sometime	47	39.2%
	Rarely	38	31.7%
	Never	31	25.8%
Tendency to eat and/ or drink more than usual	Always	0	0.0%
	Often	4	3.3%
	Sometime	30	25.0%
	Rarely	42	35.0%
	Never	44	36.7%
Tendency to smoke more than usual	Always	4	3.3%
	Often	2	1.7%
	Sometime	3	2.5%
	Rarely	13	10.8%
	Never	98	81.7%
Tendency to eat and/ or drink less than usual, that is, a decrease in appetite	Always	5	4.2%
	Often	8	6.7%
	Sometime	30	25.0%
	Rarely	41	34.2%
	Never	36	30.0%
Muscles trembling, for example, eye twitch	Always	4	3.3%
	Often	14	11.7%
	Sometime	48	40.0%
	Rarely	33	27.5%
	Never	21	17.5%
Feeling as though you don't want to get up in the morning	Always	15	12.5%
U	Often	28	23.3%
	Sometime	25	20.8%
	Rarely	20	16.7%
	Never	32	26.7%
Tendency to sweat or a feeling of your heart beating hard	Always	0	0.0%
	Often	16	13.3%
	Sometime	24	20.0%
	Rarely	23	19.2%
	Never	57	47.5%

A good number of Pharmacists feel stressed due to the indifferent shifts allotted to them as it affects their sleeping habits, which at a short term might not have an effect on their performance but in the long run

performance will decrease. But there were also cases which amounted to almost 50% of the population who believed that no such problems are faced by them.

The above table indicates that majority of the Pharmacists have problem of headaches due to their work which involves using of computers on a regular base i.e., an average of 8-10 hours spent in front of computers per day.

Indigestion or sickness does not seem to bother the Pharmacists much as majority of them feels that they were never affected by it due to work.

Since most of the Pharmacists are youth they hardly feel fatigue due to their work but cases are there where it has been a responsible for low performance in Pharmacists. These fatigues are mostly noted when Pharmacists go for double shifts.

The above chart is about the increase in eating and drinking habits when an employee is under stress. But it was noted that the sample population never experienced such problem. Hence proving this statement wrong.

Even after a male oriented employee structure in the centres, high number of Pharmacists are non-smokers which shows that there is spread of social awareness among them.

The above chart is about the decrease in eating habits when an employee is under stress. But it was noted that the sample population never experienced such problem. Hence proving this statement wrong.

The above table indicates that majority of the Pharmacists sometimes suffer from Physical problems like trembling of muscles, eye twitch etc.

Again, there is a mixed reaction among the Pharmacists regarding drowsiness as some feel they have problem in waking up early in the morning and others don't.

The above table indicates that most of the Pharmacists never have the tendency to sweat or palpitations.

Table 4. Frequency Table for Sources of Work Places

Sources of Work Places		Frequency	Percentage
I have far too much work to do	Always	5	4.2%
	Often	19	15.8%
	Sometime	50	41.7%
	Rarely	32	26.7%
	Never	14	11.7%
I have a lack of power and influence	Always	3	2.5%
	Often	8	6.7%
	Sometime	13	10.8%
	Rarely	52	43.3%
	Never	44	36.7%

Over-promotion – being promoted beyond my level of ability	Always	0	0.0%
	Often	1	0.8%
	Sometime	12	10.0%
	Rarely	23	19.2%
	Never	84	70.0%
Under-promotion – working below my level of ability	Always	2	1.7%
	Often	8	6.7%
	Sometime	21	17.5%
	Rarely	26	21.7%
	Never	63	52.5%
I do not have enough work to do	Always	4	3.3%
	Often	2	1.7%
	Sometime	21	17.5%
	Rarely	43	35.8%
	Never	50	41.7%
Managing or supervising the work of other people	Always	4	3.3%
	Often	16	13.3%
	Sometime	31	25.8%
	Rarely	43	35.8%
	Never	26	21.7%
Coping with office politics	Always	7	5.8%
	Often	7	5.8%
	Sometime	20	16.7%
	Rarely	33	27.5%
	Never	53	44.2%
Taking my work home	Always	4	3.3%
	Often	3	2.5%
	Sometime	14	11.7%
	Rarely	26	21.7%
	Never	73	60.8%
Rate of pay	Always	2	1.7%
	Often	10	8.3%
	Sometime	25	20.8%
	Rarely	28	23.3%
	Never	55	45.8%
Personal beliefs conflicting with those of the centres	Always	3	2.5%
	Often	7	5.8%
	Sometime	34	28.3%
	Rarely	32	26.7%
	Never	44	36.7%
Inadequate guidance and back up form superiors	Always	3	2.5%
	Often	8	6.7%
	Sometime	13	10.8%
	Rarely	52	43.3%
	Never	44	36.7%
Lack of consultation and communication	Always	2	1.7%
	Often	16	13.3%
	Sometime	29	24.2%
	Rarely	30	25.0%
	Never	43	35.8%

Keeping up with advances in technology	Always	14	11.7%
	Often	25	20.8%
	Sometime	45	37.5%
	Rarely	19	15.8%
	Never	17	14.2%
Ambiguity in the nature of job role	Always	4	3.3%
	Often	9	7.5%
	Sometime	34	28.3%
	Rarely	31	25.8%
	Never	42	35.0%
Inadequate or poor quality of training/ management development	Always	6	5.0%
	Often	20	16.7%
	Sometime	31	25.8%
	Rarely	19	15.8%
	Never	44	36.7%

Interpretation:

The Pharmacists sometime feel that their work is hectic and requires a lot of energy to perform it. But some Pharmacists feel the work load is less and is easily performable. The employee participation in the center's matters is minimal or negligible. They are not given the opportunity of participating in decision making and are just subjected to do their own work. Pharmacists doesn't feel that they are promoted out of turn as the government is particular about the process in which promotion is been conducted i.e., on the basis of performance. Pharmacists doesn't feel that they are promoted out of turn as the government is particular about the process in which promotion is been conducted i.e., on the basis of performance. Pharmacists feel that they have enough work to do in the centres and thus they don't feel that there is any idle time. This table shows that the amount of involvement of an individual in others work i.e., helping or supervising. In this centre the Pharmacists are rarely found indulging in others work. The Pharmacists never felt that there is politics in the centres. Majority of the Pharmacists are happy and satisfied with their co-workers.

Since it is government setup there is hardly any need of taking the work beyond its working time. But when the amount of work is too much and the deadlines for indenting are fast approaching some of the Pharmacists do take their work at or from home. The above table indicates that most of the Pharmacists are not satisfied with the rate of pay i.e., the amount of perk given over and above the basic salary. The Pharmacists feel the incentives paid is less when compared to other centres. Majority of the Pharmacists doesn't feel that there is a clash of goals of the individual and the centres but some Pharmacists do feel that such clashes occur and personal goals have to be sacrificed for the centres. Most of the Pharmacists feel that their superiors are helpful and co-operative. But some Pharmacists do have problem with their superiors. The Pharmacists of the centres rarely felt the lack of communication between them and government or government officials.

Since it is an IT firm Technology is heart and soul of the centres. Hence Upgrading itself with latest technology is part of its centres function. But some Pharmacists feel that there is a lack of technological advancement as required to perform their job and demand the government to do a better job in this regard. The Pharmacists know what is required and demanded from them by the government. They also know where they stand in the centres structure as it is clearly defined in the centres. Since IT sector is specialized field, it requires a lot of training for an individual to perfect his/her act in order to perform the job. Hence sufficient amount of training and management development programmes are conducted for the Pharmacists to improve their efficiency and stand at par with others.

Discussion

Most of the respondents are young and energetic so their level of stress is comparatively low and they are satisfied with the communication system present in the centres. Regarding the conflict resolution system, there are few Pharmacists who are not satisfied with the ways conflicts are handles in the centres. Quite a good number of Pharmacists are satisfied with the structures/cadre present in Primary Health Centres. Pharmacists are partially satisfied with the workload; they feel that too much work is being given to them. Regarding salary, many Pharmacists are dissatisfied. They feel that they should be paid more salary for the training and experience they have. So, we can say most of the Pharmacists feel stressed from the salary structure as such. There are a good number of Pharmacists who feel fatigued/ exhausted. This indicates that the Pharmacists are stressed. Few Pharmacists have the tendency of smoking more than usual. But majority of the Pharmacists do not smoke as they consider it injurious to health. There are many Pharmacists who feel drowsy all the time. It was be due to inadequate sleep. It may be considered one of the reasons for stress. The Pharmacists feel that too much of work is being allotted to them. When the employee is not able to complete the given work, it leads to stress. The Pharmacists are not satisfied relating to the Pharmacists participation in decision making as most of the decisions are taken by the superiors. The Pharmacists sometimes feel difficult in coping up with the advanced technology. Since technology keeps on changing every now and then they find it difficult to overcome with the change but they are very well satisfied with the amount of training they are provided with.

Suggestions

- Treat your body right. Eating right and exercising can increase your tolerance to stress.
- Set Realistic Goals. Do what's possible and carry on.
- Set and Re-set your priorities. Take care of important and difficult tasks first, and eliminate non-essential tasks.
- Take Five. Taking a short break can help slow down your mind long enough to improve your ability to deal with stress later.

- Learn to Relax or Meditate. Just 10 to 20 minutes of quiet reflection or meditation can bring relief from chronic stress.
- Give yourself a break. No one is perfect. Striving to be the best in everything will lead to worry, anxiety and failure.
- Learn to say 'no'. Slow down and be honest about what you can comfortably do.
- Be Flexible. Make allowances for other people's opinion and be prepared to compromise.
- Avoid excessive competition. Excessive competition can be dangerous emotionally and physically- not to mention damaging to your job.
- Manage your Anger. Retreat before you lose control. Allow time to cool down. You will be better equipped to handle the problem constructively later.
- Be honest with colleagues. Make it plain you feel you're in a bind. Don't just complain- make practical suggestions for improvement.
- Take it out with a loved one. Talking it out can help you see things more clearly, release negative feelings and get emotional support.

Conclusion

The study conducted on stress on Pharmacists at Primary Health Centres showed that the respondents were not prone to stress. A further study can be done on this topic taking various other factors into consideration. The study revealed that majority of the Pharmacists had similar response. Stress is a complex concept. It involves an interaction between the demands of the environment and how an individual perceives their ability to cope with these. A person experiences stress when the perceived demands of the environment are greater than their perceived ability to cope with these. Undoubtedly stress is a modern-day health risk. Our bodies are well adapted and have evolved to deal with short term physical threats but we are not well equipped to deal with the long-term psychological stressors of modern life.

There are many sources of stress in our lives but one well-researched source is the workplace. Most occupations involve some stress such as work overload, role conflict or job insecurity but research consistently indicates that social work, teaching and working in the police force or prison service are four of the most stressful careers.

Our understanding of stressors and the stress response has led to a greater awareness of the dangers of stress and the development of both psychological and physical methods of managing stress. Government and the Pharmacists recognize the dangers and have implemented effective strategies with the help of occupational psychologists.

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