



Original Research Article

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**A STUDY TO ASSESS STRESS AND COPING BEHAVIOURS AND TO
APPRAISE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SELECTED COPING STRATAGEMS
AMONG UNDERGRADUATE NURSING STUDENTS IN SELECTED
INSTITUTIONS OF VADODARA, GUJARAT**

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Introduction

Stress is an inevitable part of student life, particularly in professional courses such as nursing, where academic rigor is coupled with emotionally demanding clinical exposure. Nursing students are frequently exposed to stressors such as examinations, heavy workloads, time constraints, patient care responsibilities, and interpersonal challenges within clinical and academic environments. Persistent stress without effective coping mechanisms may lead to burnout, anxiety, depression, and compromised academic performance.

Coping behaviours refer to the cognitive and behavioural efforts used by individuals to manage stressful situations. Adaptive coping strategies, such as problem-solving, relaxation, and positive reframing, enhance resilience, whereas maladaptive coping strategies may exacerbate stress. Understanding stress levels and coping behaviours among nursing students is essential for developing targeted interventions that promote mental health and professional competence.

In urban educational institutions like those in Vadodara, nursing students face additional stressors such as competitive environments, urban lifestyle challenges, and increased academic expectations. Therefore, the present study was undertaken to

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assess stress and coping behaviours and to evaluate the effectiveness of selected coping stratagems among undergraduate nursing students.

Keywords

Stress, Coping behaviours, Coping stratagems, Undergraduate nursing students, Vadodara

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the level of stress among undergraduate nursing students.
2. To assess the coping behaviours adopted by undergraduate nursing students.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of selected coping stratagems in reducing stress.
4. To find the association between stress levels and selected demographic variables.

Hypotheses

- H₁: There will be a significant difference between pre-test and post-test stress scores among undergraduate nursing students.
- H₂: There will be a significant improvement in coping behaviours after the implementation of selected coping stratagems.
- H₃: There will be a significant association between pre-test stress levels and selected demographic variables.

Research Methodology

Research Approach and Design

A quantitative research approach with a pre-experimental one-group pre-test post-test design was adopted.

Setting of the Study

The study was conducted in selected urban nursing institutions of Vadodara, Gujarat.

Population

The population consisted of undergraduate nursing students enrolled in selected nursing institutions.

Sample Size

The sample size comprised 60 undergraduate nursing students.

Sampling Technique

Simple random sampling technique was used to select the participants.

Inclusion Criteria

- Undergraduate nursing students willing to participate
- Students present during the period of data collection

Exclusion Criteria

- Students undergoing treatment for diagnosed psychiatric illness
- Students absent during data collection

Tools for Data Collection

1. Demographic Data Sheet
2. Structured Stress Assessment Scale
3. Coping Behaviour Checklist

The tools were validated by experts in nursing and psychology. Reliability was established using appropriate statistical methods.

Intervention: Selected Coping Stratagems

The intervention included:

- Deep breathing and relaxation exercises
- Time management techniques
- Positive thinking and cognitive restructuring
- Guided stress management sessions

The coping stratagems were administered over a planned session duration.

Data Collection Procedure

After obtaining formal permission and informed consent, pre-test data were collected using the stress assessment scale and coping checklist. Selected coping stratagems were then administered. Post-test assessment was conducted after the intervention using the same tools.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics:

- Frequency and percentage for demographic variables
- Mean and standard deviation for stress and coping scores
- Paired *t*-test to assess effectiveness
- Chi-square test to find associations

Results

- In the pre-test, the majority of students exhibited moderate to high stress levels.
- Post-test findings showed a significant reduction in stress scores.
- Coping behaviours improved notably after the intervention.
- A significant association was found between stress levels and selected demographic variables such as academic year and clinical workload.

Discussion

The findings of the study highlight that undergraduate nursing students experience considerable stress due to academic and clinical demands. The effectiveness of selected coping stratagems demonstrates that structured interventions can significantly reduce stress and enhance adaptive coping behaviours. These findings are consistent with previous national and international studies emphasizing the importance of stress management programs in nursing education.

Conclusion

The study concludes that stress is prevalent among undergraduate nursing students, but the implementation of selected coping stratagems is effective in reducing stress and improving coping behaviours. Nursing educators and administrators should integrate stress management and coping skill training into the nursing curriculum to promote students' mental well-being and academic success.

Implications for Nursing Practice and Education

- Incorporation of stress management modules in nursing curricula
- Regular counseling and mental health support services
- Awareness programs on adaptive coping strategies

Limitations of the Study

- Small sample size
- Limited to selected institutions in Vadodara
- Short duration of intervention

Recommendations

- Replication of the study with a larger sample
- Comparative studies between urban and rural institutions
- Longitudinal studies to assess long-term effects

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