

A Pilot Study to Assess the Coping among First Year Students of Bachelor of Science in Nursing Course from a Selected College of Nursing, Bangalore

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ABSTRACT

Beginning life at college naturally generates both excitement and anxiety for many reasons including the academic responsibilities and meeting new people. Students are expected to be more independent in a college. One may find that his or her fellow students are more motivated or instructors are more demanding. As a result of these new demands, it is common for college students to experience greater levels of stress related to academics. The present study has been undertaken as a pilot study to assess the coping among first year nursing students with an intention to prepare a coping strategy later. The research approach used for the present study was quantitative. A descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted among 20 first year students of Bachelor of Science in nursing course from a selected college in Bangalore. Subjects were selected by simple random sampling technique. The coping was assessed using a standardized tool called stress coping style inventory. The baseline characteristics of the subjects were assessed by a researcher prepared questionnaire. The analysis of baseline characteristics revealed that 80% of the subjects were female where as 20% were male. Third or more was the order of birth for 60% of the subjects. Monthly income of the family was <10,000 for 55% of the subjects. Regarding the education of parents 50% each belonged to the category of <10th

standard and >10th standard. Regarding the type of family 60% of the subjects belonged to nuclear family. And 75% of the subjects took the decision to join the nursing course by self where as 25% of subjects joined to nursing course due to compulsion from parents or significant others. For 60% of subjects the reason for joining the nursing was service to mankind where as 40 % of subjects reported other interests like job opportunity, money and going abroad. Regarding the coping the Mean percentage of passive problem coping was the highest (77.33) with a Mean \pm SD of 23.2 \pm 5.11 followed by active emotional coping with a mean percentage of 71.5 and a Mean \pm SD of 28.6 \pm 3.77. The mean percentage of active problem was 70.16 with a Mean \pm SD of 21.05 \pm 3.89. The mean percentage of passive emotional coping (67.5) was the least with a Mean \pm SD of 20.25 \pm 3.72

Keywords: Coping, nursing students, first year B.Sc. nursing.

INTRODUCTION

Stress has a major impact on mental and physical health. It limits our ability to function. Coping refers to efforts to manage stress. Coping can be adaptive or maladaptive. Adaptive coping strategies generally involve confronting problems directly, making reasonably realistic appraisals of problems, recognizing and changing unhealthy emotional reactions, and trying to prevent adverse effects on the body. Maladaptive coping includes using

alcohol or drugs to escape problems. Nursing students have been reported to respond physically to stress including increased heart rate and intestinal peristalsis, altered appetite, sleep deprivation, headaches and other physical effects. Psychological challenges such as depression, anxiety, and stress may potentially lead to poor academic achievement, as demonstrated by lower overall grade point average (GPA). When a student achieves a low GPA, he or she may become discouraged and decide to drop out of college. The level of psychological distress among college students warrants all educators, administrators, and counselors to study patterns on campuses to be able to provide wellness promotion and intervene when necessary. So it is important to know what coping strategies the nursing students are using.

High stress and anxiety impede concentration, memory, and problem-solving ability, which in turn, adversely affect academic performance and learning. It is significant for nursing faculty to be mindful of the anxiety that students encounter. The use of humor, peer instructors and mentors, and mindfulness training are the three strategies described in the literature as successful interventions to reduce the anxiety. ^[1]

A descriptive cross-sectional study was performed to determine sources of stress and coping strategies in nursing students studying at the Iran Faculty of Nursing & Midwifery. All undergraduate nursing students enrolled in years 1-4 during academic year 2004-2005 were included in this study, with a total of 366 questionnaires fully completed by the students. The Student Stress Survey and the Adolescent Coping Orientation for Problem Experiences Inventory (ACOPE) were used for data collection. Interpersonal and environmental sources of stress were reported more frequently than intrapersonal and academic sources. Mean interpersonal ($P=0.04$) and environmental ($P=0.04$) sources of stress were significantly greater

in first year than in fourth year students. Among coping strategies in 12 areas, the family problem solving strategies, "trying to reason with parents and compromise" (73%) and "going along with family rules" (68%) were used "often or always" by most students. To cope with engaging in demanding activity, students often or always used "trying to figure out how to deal with problems" (66.4%) and "trying to improve themselves" (64.5%). The self-reliance strategy, "trying to make their own decisions" (62%); the social support strategies, "apologizing to people" (59.6%), "trying to help other people solve their problems" (56.3%), and "trying to keep up friendships or make new friends" (54.4%); the spiritual strategy, "praying" (65.8%); the seeking diversions strategy, "listening to music" (57.7%), the relaxing strategy "day dreaming" (52.5%), and the effort to "be close with someone cares about you" (50.5%) were each used "often or always" by a majority of students. Most students reported that the avoiding strategies "smoking" (93.7%) and "drinking beer or wine" (92.9%), the ventilating strategies "saying mean things to people" and "swearing" (85.8%), the professional support strategies "getting professional counseling" (74.6%) and "talking to a teacher or counselor" (67.2%) and the humorous strategy "joking and keeping a sense of humor" (51.9%) were used "seldom or never". ^[2]

A study was conducted to measure levels of distress, sources of stress and ways of coping in a convenience sample of psychiatric nursing students ($n = 35$). Instruments used were the 30-item General Health Questionnaire, the Jones and Johnson (1997) Student Nurse Stress Index, Parkes (1985) Ways of Coping Questionnaire and a demographic questionnaire. Findings revealed that all students were significantly distressed, exceeding a conventional cut-off score of 5 on the 30-item General Health Questionnaire. Students were found to have limited coping skills. Preparing to become a

nurse in this setting was found to be significantly emotionally stressful and a possible risk to the well-being of students. [3]

Managing stress effectively and seeking coping strategy in an appropriate way is very important for preventing the negative effects of stress. A descriptive study was performed to explore sources of stress and coping strategies among AU nursing students. Data were collected from 154 nursing students who enrolled in year one to four in academic year 2008. Two measurements, including Student Stress Survey and Adolescent Coping Orientation for Problem Experiences Inventory, were modified and employed. Results revealed that finding new friends and work with the unfamiliar people were ranked as the main sources contributing interpersonal stress; intrapersonal sources of stress represented by outstanding personal achievement and speaking in the public; academic stressors, the highly reported stressor were associated with using second language and increasing new responsibilities; and placed in unusual situation was environmental stressor. Furthermore, coping strategies that students always used to overcome stress composed of developing self-reliance and being humorous. [4]

A study was conducted to determine the stressors and coping strategies in nursing students studying at Shifa college of Nursing, Islamabad- Pakistan. Analytical cross-sectional study was carried out and data was collected from 78 nursing students of all years of B.Sc. Nursing by using student's stress and coping inventory of Lazarus & Folk man (1984). Findings revealed that the score of stress level in nursing theory was 2.37, clinical experience = 2.35, College environment= 2.39 and social / personal environment= 2.51. The p-value of one way ANOVA amongst classes was significant for clinical experience (P = 0.000), college environment (P = 0.00) and social / personal environment (P = 0.000). Most common coping strategies used by the students were discuss with friends (Mean=

2.75), did what is expected of (Mean= 2.84), self analysis (Mean= 2.38), accept the situation (Mean= 3.1) and become involved in other activities (Mean=2.75, SD= 0.99). [5]

There are many studies on stress and coping among nursing students and most of them were conducted in abroad .The particular study has been undertaken to assess the coping among first year students of Bachelor of Science in nursing course with an intention to prepare a coping strategy later.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study has been undertaken as a pilot study to assess the coping among first year students of Bachelor of Science in nursing course .The research approach used for the present study was quantitative. A descriptive research design is adopted for the study. The study was conducted among 20 first year students of Bachelor of Science in nursing course in a selected college in Bangalore. Subjects were selected by simple random technique. The coping was assessed using a standardized tool called stress coping style inventory. The baseline characteristics of the subjects were assessed by a researcher prepared questionnaire. A prior permission was obtained from the principal of a selected college of nursing, Bangalore before conducting the study. Informed consent was obtained from the students who met the inclusion criteria. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

RESULTS

The analysis of baseline characteristics revealed that 80% of the subjects were females where as 20% were males. Third or more was the order of birth for 60% of the subjects. Monthly income of the family was <10,000 for 55% of the subjects. Regarding the education of parents 50% each belonged to the category of <10th standard and >10th standard. Regarding the type of family 60% of the subjects belonged to nuclear family. And 75% of the subjects took the decision to join the nursing course

by self where as 25% of subjects joined to nursing course due to compulsion from parents or significant others .For 60% of subjects the reason for joining the nursing was service to mankind where as 40 % of subjects reported other interests like job opportunity, money and going abroad. Regarding the coping the Mean percentage of passive problem coping was the highest (77.33) with a Mean \pm SD of 23.2 \pm 5.11 followed by active emotional coping with a mean percentage of 71.5 and a Mean \pm SD of 28.6 \pm 3.77.The mean percentage of active problem was 70.16 with a Mean \pm SD of 21.05 \pm 3.89 .The mean percentage of passive emotional coping (67.5) was the least with a Mean \pm SD of 20.25 \pm 3.72

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

SECTION 1: ANALYSIS OF THE BASELINE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUBJECTS

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of subjects according to baseline Characteristics N=20

Sl.No	Baseline Characteristics	f	%
1	Gender		
	Male	4	20
	Female	16	80
2	Order of birth		
	First	3	15
	Second	5	25
	Third or more	12	60
3	Monthly income of the family		
	<10000	11	55
	>10000	9	45
4	Education of parents		
	Father		
	<_10th std	10	50
	>_10th std	10	50
	Mother		
	<_10th std	10	50
>_10th std	10	50	
5	Type of family		
	Nuclear	12	60
	Joint	7	35
	Extended	1	5
6	Decision to join nursing course		
	Self interest	15	75
	Pressure from others	5	25
7	Reason for selecting the nursing course		
	Service to mankind	12	60
	Other interests	8	40

The data presented in Table 1 shows that 80% of the subjects were female where as 20% were male. Third or more was the order of birth for 60% of the subjects. Monthly income of the family was <10,000 for 55% of the subjects. Regarding the

education of parents 50% each belonged to the category of <10th standard and >10th standard. Regarding the type of family 60% of the subjects belonged to nuclear family. And 75% of the subjects took the decision to join the nursing course by self where as 25% of subjects joined to nursing course due to compulsion from parents or significant others .For 60% of subjects the reason for joining the nursing was service to mankind where as 40 % of subjects reported other interests like job opportunity, money and going abroad.

SECTION 2: ANALYSIS OF COPING AMONG SUBJECTS

Table 2: Mean, SD and Mean percentage of stress scores of subjects

Coping	Mean	SD	Mean percentage
Active emotional coping	28.6	3.77	71.5
Passive emotional coping	20.25	3.72	67.5
Active problem coping	21.05	3.89	70.16
Passive problem coping	23.2	5.11	77.33

The data presented in table 2 shows that the Mean percentage of passive problem coping was the highest (77.33) with a Mean \pm SD of 23.2 \pm 5.11 followed by active emotional coping with a mean percentage of 71.5 and a Mean \pm SD of 28.6 \pm 3.77.The mean percentage of active problem was 70.16 with a Mean \pm SD of 21.05 \pm 3.89 .The mean percentage of passive emotional coping (67.5) was the least with a Mean \pm SD of 20.25 \pm 3.72

DISCUSSION

In the present study the mean percentage of passive problem coping was the highest (77.33) with a Mean \pm SD of 23.2 \pm 5.11. Passive problem coping includes Procrastinating problems: temporarily putting aside or passively constraining the problem and Evasion of problems which includes alcohol or drug abuse to cause numbness, evade problems, and decrease standards. A similar finding was observed in another study. A study was conducted to assess coping strategies of nursing students for dealing with university stress. The findings of the study revealed that the coping strategy most used by

nursing students is escape. A connection was also detected between the academic dissatisfaction variable and the use of negative coping strategies. [6]

CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that student nurses are using various coping methods. Passive problem coping had highest mean percentage (77.33) followed by active emotional coping with a mean percentage of 71.5, active problem coping with a mean percentage of 70.16 and passive emotional coping with a mean percentage (67.5). The present study has been conducted as a pilot study and further studies can be conducted with a large sample size to generalize the findings. Various strategies can be planned to enhance coping among first year nursing students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I express my sincere thanks to Ying Ming Lin and Farn Shing Chen for granting the permission to use the stress coping style inventory.

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How to cite this article: Jacob J, Ezhilarasu PV. A Pilot study to assess the coping among first year students of Bachelor of Science in nursing course from a selected college of nursing, Bangalore. *International Journal of Science & Healthcare Research*. 2017; 2(1): 10-14.
