# The study of job stress and related factors in nurses of Sanandaj Besat Hospital

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**ABSTRACT**

**Introduction:** As important members of health care and therapeutic teams, nurses play a major role in enhancing and improving the health of society. Stress and anxiety are among the well-known and inseparable elements of modern nursing which cause numerous problems for both nurses and the patients.

**Methods:** this research is an analytical, descriptive research conducted to determine the level of occupational stress and the factors that influence it among nurses working in Besat Hospital of Sanandaj. The population studied consisted of all the patients working in different wards of hospital. The information required was collected using three questionnaires. The first questionnaire included background information (age, gender, etc.) in the first section and Hospital Stress Scale (HSS) including 35 questions in the second section and Shrez's self-efficiency questionnaire including 17 questions and General Health Questionnaire (GHQ). Descriptive and interpretive statistics and chi-square and t-test were used for data analysis.

**Results:** according to this research, the following results were achieved about the stress scale: 47% with high levels of stress, 50% with average levels of stress and 3% with low levels of stress. A significant correlation was observed between the level of occupational stress and type of ward. Higher levels of stress were observed in the emergency services ward compared to general wards. A significant correlation was also observed between the work history and the level of stress and anxiety.

**Conclusion:** as a large percentage of nurses have an average level of stress, it is necessary to come up with certain strategies to deal with occupational stress among nurses.

**KEY WORDS:** Occupational Stress, Nurses, Effective Factors.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Stress is a special kind of relationship between the individual and environment, and the individual considers it a threat, demand and request that is well beyond his abilities and resources and jeopardize his comfort and ease (Navidian, 2005; Jahangiri, 2016). One of the many kinds of stress is occupational stress which can affect the employees based upon its internal stressful factors (Phipps, 1995; Rafat, 2015). Due to the great responsibility to treat patients and to provide them with comfort and ease, the jobs and occupations correlated with medicine are affected by various stressful factors (Isikhan, 2004; Ghaffari, 2015) The responsibilities that health workers have about looking after patients, attending emergency situations and making correct decisions specially when it is difficult or impossible to have access to others are among the stressful factors in medicine. The sudden occurrence of accidents, incidents and chronic diseases result in stressful working periods and tensions in physical works (Ghobadi, 2013; Ghannad, 2016; Masoumi, 2016; Ivancevich and Ganster, 2014). Further to all these issues, other problems such as long working shifts, long working hours and few number of clinical personnel compared to patients helps build up psychological pressure among this group of workers (Ruotsalainen, 2015).

Long term and constant stresses of work place may result in occupational depression and other issues such as quitting, repetitive absences, less energy and low working efficiency (Malek and Dadashzadeh, 2008; Shakerinia and Mohammadpour, 2010). There is a direct correlation between stress and job satisfaction and performance of the individual and it is considered to be one of the elements affecting the health and safety. Finally, making up for the damages and other costs correlated with diseases and side effects caused by work place stresses encourage us to pay special attention to this issue (Randell and Altmaier, 1998). As the statistics indicate, stress and other factors and issues caused by it damage hundreds of working days every year and an average of 1 million people refrain from attending their job every day as a result of the disturbances and malignancies caused by it (Shin, 2016). Occupational self-efficiency is influenced by and influences motivation and behavior and high levels of it help enhance participation in occupational behaviors and assignments (Beyrami, 2008; Taghavi, 2002).

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive analytical research. The research population included all the nurses working in Besat Hospital of Sanandaj. The sample included all the nurses in Besat Center. The required information was gathered using three questionnaires. The first questionnaire included background information (age, gender, etc.) in the first section and

Hospital Stress Scale (HSS) including 35 questions in the second section and Shrez's self-efficiency questionnaire including 17 questions and General Health Questionnaire (GHQ). To enhance the accuracy of answering, the respondents were provided with the questionnaire during three time periods and the information required for answering was given to them. The questionnaires were given to the individuals over the period of one working month so that they could consider different stressful situations within the first 2 weeks of the month and complete occupational stress questionnaire. The general health questionnaire was due for the third week and last week was reserved for self-efficiency questionnaire and the respondents were asked to complete them based upon a measurement of their working performance. SPSS v.19 and t-test and chi-square were used to analyze the data.

## 3. RESULTS

Based on the results and out of the 500 cases studied in this research, 80% of the respondents were female and 20% were male. 65% of them were within the age range of 24 – 35. 58% of the cases were single, while 42% were married. 97% of the respondent had a bachelor's degree in nursing and only 3% had master's or doctorate's degree. Most of the cases were working in general wards and more than half of them had a working experience of longer than 4 years. 75% of the respondents were working in both morning and evening shifts and only 25% were working just in morning shift. The majority of samples (65%) had 20 to 22 shifts a month. 80% of the samples studied had done at least 80 hours overtime in a month and just 20% had done their assigned shifts and had done no overtime.

The results indicated a significant correlation between occupational stress of nurses and self-efficiency among the nurses working in Besat Hospital of Sanandaj ($P < 0.05$). The results showed lower levels of self-efficiency among those nurses who had higher levels of stress.

The results indicated a significant correlation between the occupational stress and health of those nurses working in Besat Hospital of Sanandaj (P 0.003). It was shown that those nurses who had lower levels of stress had a better level of general health.

47% of the cases studied had high levels of stress while 50% and 3% had average and low levels of stress respectively. A significant correlation was observed between the levels of occupational stress and types of hospital wards ($P < 0.002$). 65% of the staff working in ICU and emergency services of the hospital had high levels of stress and 25% of the nurses who worked in the general wards had low levels of stress (table.1).

**Table.1. distribution of research cases in terms of levels of stress**

| Levels of stress | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Low | 3 |
| Average | 50 |
| High | 47 |
| Total | 100 |

A significant correlation was also observed between work experience and levels of stress ($P < 0.001$). In other words, 73% of those with a work experience less than 3 years had high levels of stress while 25% of those with 2 to 6 years of work experience and 45% of those with 6 years of work experience had high levels of stress. A significant correlation was also observed between stress level of patients and other personal and professional features ($P < 0.002$).

## DISCUSSION

According to the results of this research, the occupational stress levels of most wards studied were average. The results pointed to the fact that nurses had an average level of occupational stress in educational hospitals (Rahimi, 2014). The results of other researches have reported the level of occupational stress to be normal. Another research conducted on the nurses working in the ICU of hospitals showed a usual level of stress among them.

Another finding of this research was the correlation between occupational stress and personal and professional features. A statistically significant correlation was also observed between occupational stress and type of ward. The average levels of stress among those nurses working in ICU and emergency services of hospitals was 65% while this level was 25 among those working in general ward. According to the results of researches, the total stress score among those nurses working in ICU and emergency services unit of hospitals was more than those working in general wards (Taghavi, 2002).

The difference in the level of stress among these two groups can be attributed to factors such as the individual characteristics of workers, the dominant leadership and management system, mental environment and physical features of the workplace. Concerning the individual traits of people, one may refer to factors such as different personalities, people's understanding of stress, excitability threshold, their adaptive mechanisms against stress, the range of adaptability experienced by them, work experience, etc. Individual traits of people can play a major role in how they identify and interpret stress. We may conclude that those people with higher levels of flexibility in dealing with tensions

will experience lower levels of stress. As for the mental features of work place, it is better to take into consideration factors such as communication, management and leadership methods in organization, justice in organization, supervision methods, rules, patients' and colleagues' expectations, awareness and mastery, work standards, etc. The facilities at work such as physical conditions and sanity of work place such as light, noise, etc. are among the physical features of work place that influence stress levels.

Various researches have pointed to the fact that heavy burden of work, dealing with dead patients, poor relationships with colleagues, unpredictable nature of the job and shift work, insufficient preparation, lack of mental supports and disagreement with doctors, ambiguity about their authority and political and workers' union issues, material resources, opposition and difference between workplace and home and rise of system of law and rules are some stressful factors that cause stress among nurses. The greatest negative effect on the mental health of nurses is the heavy work load.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Therefore it is necessary for managers of health organization to pay more attention to signs and symptoms of stress among nursing employees such as depression, keeping away from patients, absence and reduction of work quality. They need to pay greater attention to social and managerial supports and in work place in order to reduce the levels and destructive effects of occupational stress.

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