

# OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG NURSES

**Josfeena Bashir**

Nursing Tutor,  
BGSBU University, Rajouri

## INTRODUCTION

Nursing or care for the sick has existed since the beginning of the civilization. But it has not proper recognition till the starting of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It has been emerged as a profession in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by and the 20<sup>th</sup> century it had evolved into a specialty with unique role function.

Along with the increased demand and progress in the nursing profession. The stress among the nurses has also increased. It is generally perceived that nursing profession undergoes remarkable stress. Thus is more common in staff nurses working in specialty, critical care areas. This results in stress which affects patient care, job performance and job satisfaction.

Stress is a multi-dimensional perception and may be defined based on language and organizational viewpoints. It often occurs when individuals' physical and emotional do not match or cannot handle their job demands, constraints and/or opportunities. It may establish two major types of stress: Eustress (good stress) and distress (bad stress) (Fevre et al., 2003; Sullivan & Bhagat, 1992). Eustress is often defined as persons who have faced moderate and low stress levels and distress is normally defined as individuals who have experienced high stress. Individuals who face eustress will meet job demands and this may help them to increase positive work life (e.g., professional interest and development). Conversely, persons who faced distress will not able to achieve job demands and this may decrease quality of work life (e.g., dissatisfaction and negative moral values) (Fevre et al., 2003; Leka et al., 2004; Millward, 2005; Newell, 2002).

Scientific proof shows that occupational stress, job fulfilment, and employee loyalty have positive degree of interrelation (Chandraiah et al., 2003, Kim et al., 2009; Abdullah et al., 2009). Different job stressors, as well as the occupational stress as a whole, were proved to significantly influence job satisfaction in a negative way (House & Rizzo, 1972; Cavanaugh et al., 2000; Kim et al., 2009; Luthans, 2011

According to Edwin A job satisfaction is defined as "A pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job experience.

Some people love their jobs, some people tolerate their jobs, and some people cannot stand their jobs.

Nursing is generally perceived as demanding profession. Along with the increased demand and progress in the nursing profession, stress among the nurses has also increased. Stress is explained when demand made on us outweigh our resources. When the person is subjected to stressor, a characteristics syndrome of physical reactions will occur. The stress concept can also be seen as active in a holistic view of the person. The stress response can be physical, psychological, emotional or spiritual in nature and is usually a combination of these dimensions. Stress, similarly, can arise from one or more dimensions and can be either internal or external. A moderate level of stress or "Eustress" is an important motivating factor and is considered normal and necessary. If stress is intense, continuous, and repeated, it become a negative phenomenon or "Distress", which can lead to physical illness and nursing profession undergoes tremendous stress which effect on work performance of nurses and ultimately affects the patient care. Chronic stress take a toll when there are additional stress factors like home stress, conflict at work, inadequate staffing, poor teamwork, inadequate training, and poor supervision. Stress is known to cause emotional exhaustion in nurses and leads to negative feeling toward those in their care.

**Causes of occupational stress among nurses**-Research studies on stress in nursing have identified a variety of stressors include-

- poor working relationships between nurses and doctors and other health care professional,
- demanding communication and relationship with patient and relatives,
- emergency cases,
- high workload,
- understaffing and lack of support or positive feedback from senior nursing staff,
- role conflict,
- Home-work imbalance.

Stress has a result for individual in term of –

- health,
- wellbeing
- and job dissatisfaction,

As well as for organization in term of

- absenteeism
- Quality of patient care.
- mobility of nurses

Level of job satisfaction is an extent to which person likes or dislikes his job. Multiple factors can influence person's level of job satisfaction, this factor range from the level of pay and benefits, perceived fairness of promotion system within the organization, the quality of working condition to leadership and social relationship. Job satisfaction of the nurses is a crucial indicator or good working environment and management of the institution.

The low job satisfaction among nurses and the achievement of positive outcome such as a low patient fall rate are issues that affect both quality and cost of patient care. Although the cost of nurse job dissatisfaction has not been directly measured, the high cost of turnover rate has been well established. Poor patient outcome such as an increased patient fall rate also increases the cost of healthcare. Moreover, poor patient outcomes increase the length of stay, increase resource utilization, and increase the cost of treatment. Dissatisfied not only give poor quality, less efficient care. Nurses who were not satisfied at work were also found to distance themselves from their patients and their nursing chores.

Nurses perhaps are the best friend of patients. Though they get paid for the job, the care and concern they exhibit for the patient is unparalleled and most of the time goes beyond any financial remuneration. There are instances where nurses experience high stress level that leads to negative work environments that rob nurses of their spirit and passion about their job. Consequently, unsatisfied workers might lead to burnout, where burnout associated with stress has been documented in healthcare professionals including nurses and is considered as one of the potential hazards occurring among individuals who do "people work".

Studies have provided evidence that satisfied workers tend to be more productive, creative, committed and will eventually contribute to higher quality patient care and patient satisfaction, tend to care more about work quality and are more generally productive. However, there are times when nurses find themselves in "Burnout" situations manifested by emotional exhaustion, detachment, and lack of drive and enthusiasm to work and achieve. Among health care professionals, nurses have been found to be most prone to burn out. Moreover, studies have shown that burnout among nurses has a negative effect on the quality of patient care and patient satisfaction. Burnout and low Job satisfaction indeed contributes into the nurses' inefficiency and affects their dedication to job quality and care given negative correlation between occupational stress an organizational commitment and also performance of the nurses.

Satisfied workers tend to be more productive, creative and committed. Therefore, a highly satisfied and free from burnout nurses' will eventually be effective in rendering quality nursing care since their ultimate goal is the patient satisfaction. Employees can directly influence patient satisfaction in that their involvement and interaction with patients plays a significant role in quality perception. Nurse's job satisfaction has positive correlation with patient fall rate.

#### Some suggestion by author

- Nurses are usually made responsible for non-nursing activities which cause extra burden of work on them. A non-nursing activity will not be provide for nurses
- Time to time learning programme should be organized for nurses to understand new health care technology
- Give them chance to use their knowledge and training to apply for patient care not only for obeying doctor's orders
- Fair payment & promotion policies should be made by regulatory authorities.
- Supervisors and also improve independence and compensation of nurses will help to improve their performance.
- Occupational stress is a major health problem for both individual employees & organizations and can lead to burn out, illness, labour turnover and absence in work performances studies have proven that there is negative correlation between occupational stress and organizational commitment and also performance of the nurses.
- Nurses working in very hectic condition with a continues long period so hospital should arrange comfortable & suitable environment.
- Hospital administrator recognizes the stressful factors and tries to resolve them.
- Hospital administrator should recruit adequate no. of staff so that overburden of work should avoided
- Recreational session should be part of duty plan.

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