



## STUDY TO ASSESS STRESS AND COPING STRATEGIES USED BY THE PARENTS OF CRITICALLY ILL CHILDREN ADMITTED IN PICU.

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### ABSTRACT

Having a child or infant in the hospital is of the most stressful events parents can experience. Pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) is a highly stressful environment to most parents. Having one's child admitted to a PICU is difficult for parents. The criteria for admission to a PICU are frightening and can realistically prompt fear that their child could die or become severely disabled. They may be overwhelmed with the stress of the illness, compliment medical information, and worry for their child's future while trying to balance other family demands and maintain some continuity in their daily lives. As they encounter stressors, they must find ways to cope and to maintain stability. The transactional model of stress and coping provides a framework for the study of the process of stress appraisal and subsequent coping efforts this model emphasizes the interaction between an individual and their environment with coping viewed as a process<sup>1</sup>. **Material and Method:** The sample of the study consists of 50 parents of critically ill children. Purposive sampling technique was used to collect data. Modified stress scale (5 point likert scale) used to assess the stress level and 5 point rating scale was used to know coping strategy. **Result:** The finding of the study show that 80% of parents having moderate stress and 20 % parents have mild stress. The coping strategy of parents is 36% poor ,46% average coping and 18% well coping. By using Pearson's correlation coefficient significant positive correlation was found between stress and coping strategy score among parents of critically ill children at existing( $r=0.873$ ,  $p\text{-value}=0.0001$ ).

**KEYWORDS :** Stress, Coping strategy, parents, critically ill child

### INTRODUCTION

Having a child or infant in the hospital is of the most stressful events parents can experience. Pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) is a highly stressful environment to most parents. Having one's child admitted to a PICU is difficult for parents. The criteria for admission to a PICU are frightening and can realistically prompt fear that their child could die or become severely disabled. They may be overwhelmed with the stress of the illness, compliment medical information, and worry for their child's future while trying to balance other family demands and maintain some continuity in their daily lives. As they encounter stressors, they must find ways to cope and harness resources to maintain stability. The transactional model of stress and coping provides a framework for the study of the process of stress appraisal and subsequent coping efforts. this model emphasizes the interaction between an individual and their environment with coping viewed as a process.<sup>1</sup>

A relatively new social media phenomena is the use of blogs to write about personal experiences A weblog provides a format in which an individual articulates his/her thoughts in a time sequenced manner to create an internet – based journals. Having a child or infant in the hospital is one of the most stressful events parents can experience. They may be overwhelmed with the stress of the illness, complicated medical information, and worry for their child's future while trying to balance other family demands and maintain some continuity in their daily lives. As they encounter stressors, they must find ways to cope and harness resources to maintain stability.<sup>2</sup> The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping provides a framework for the study of the process of stress appraisal and subsequent coping efforts. The prevalence of blogs about either patients or their family members experience with illness has increased dramatically in recent years. Many parents are writing about their experiences when their child is hospitalized (Heilferty,2011) There is little research on these online narratives of the family's experience of illness, yet they represent a potentially rich source of information for healthcare providers to learn about what families go through when in such situations.

### PROBLEM STATEMENT

Study to assess stress and coping strategies used by the parents of critically ill children admitted in PICU.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the stress among parents of critically ill children admitted in PICU.
2. To assess the coping strategies by the parents of critically ill children admitted in PICU.
3. To correlate the stress and coping strategies by the parents of critically ill children admitted in PICU.

### METHODOLOGY

**Research approach:-** Descriptive survey approach is used in this study.

**Research design:-** Descriptive Research design is used in this study. Setting of the study:-The study will be conducted in hospital I in PICU.

**Sample:-** In this study the samples are parents of children's admitted in PICU.

**Sampling Technique:-** In this study, non probability Purposive sampling technique is used.

**Sample size:-** 50 parents.

**Tool-** Modified parents stress scale is used to assess the stress and coping scale was used to assess the coping strategy among parents

### Sampling Criteria

#### Inclusion Criteria

1. Who are willing to participate in the study.
2. Who can understand Marathi and English.
3. Who are present at the time of data collection.

#### Exclusive Criteria

- Parents of children with terminal illness.
- Parents who are not willing to participate in the study.

### DISCUSSION

The average parental stress score was 3.5. The main causes of extremely stressful situations were the sight of their child being unresponsive, sight of monitors & equipment in PICU, other sick

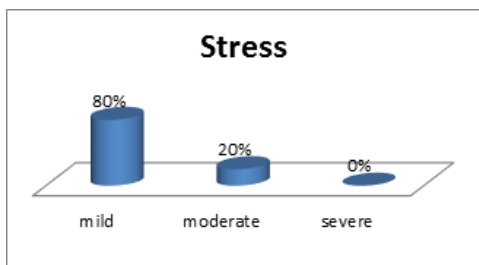
children in PICU, crises in other children in the PICU. Parents of children who got admitted in PICU for the first time were more stressed. Younger parents were more stressed than older parents, irrespective of the illness and clinical status.

A study was conducted in relation to children with chronic illness. In their study they used to examine the coping pattern of 22 parents of children on home apnea monitoring. Parents reported that they use different coping patterns to cope with their children's illness. That includes maintaining social support, self esteem and psychological ability and understanding health situations more than the fathers in the study.

A study was conducted to examine the stress and coping styles of parents with children who had undergone open-heart surgery. The researcher used two methods of data collection, observation and interview. First, she observed 59 parents of children undergoing open-heart surgery; while they were visiting their children for the first time in the PICU. Then she interviewed the parents the day after the child's surgery, when the child was still in the PICU or in the general unit. She concluded that the parents cope in the variety of ways during this stressful event. She observed emotional withdrawal from the situation, interest in the physiological aspects of the child's condition (intellectualization), and structuring or focusing only on certain part of the child and the illness as methods that parents used to deal with their child's hospitalization in the PICU after open heart surgery.

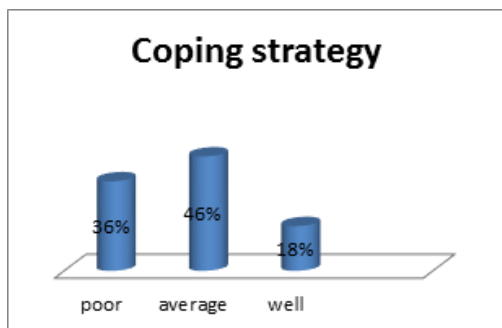
**RESULT**

Age group of 18-25 years, 54% in the age group of 26-35 years, 32% in the age group of 36-45 years and only 2% were in the age of more than 45 years. 44% of the parents were Hindus, 34% were Muslim, 14% were Buddhist and 8% were of other religion. Each 50% of the parents of critically ill children were belonging to rural and urban areas. 2% of the parents were educated up to primary standard, 38% up to secondary, 58% were educated up to under graduation and only 2% were postgraduates and above. 4% of the parents had monthly income of less than 7000 Rs, 56% in the range of 7000-15000 Rs and 14% had monthly income of 16000-29000 Rs. 6% of the parents had one children, 86% had two children and 8% of the parents had three children.



**Graph 1: Assessment of sample with regard to stress**

The above graph show that 80% of parents having



moderate stress and 20 % parents have mild stress 0% severe stress.

**Graph 2: Assessment of sample with regard to coping strategy**

The above Graph show that coping strategy of parents is 36% poor, 46% average coping and 18% well coping.

**Table 1: Correlation between stress and coping strategy score of parents of critically ill children admitted in PICU.**

	mean	Standard Deviation	N	Correlation 'r'	P value
Stress	32.26	11.19	50	0.873	0.0001,S
Coping strategy	42.08	20.25	50		

By using Pearson's correlation coefficient significant positive correlation was found between stress and coping strategy score among parents of critically ill children at existing( $r=0.873$ ,  $p$ -value=0.0001).

**CONCLUSION**

Stress is a state of physical and psychological strain. Parents are having mild and moderate stress of critically ill children admitted in PICU. Coping strategy is poor and average.

**Recommendations:** On the basis of the findings of the study, it is recommended that the following studies can be conducted.

- A similar study can be undertaken for large sample to generalize the findings.
- A comparative study can be carried out the on stress and coping strategy of other care takers of critically ill children admitted in PICU.
- A study can be undertaken to identify the stress and coping strategy among grandmother and grandfather of critically ill children admitted in PICU.

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