



## STUDY OF PERCEIVED STRESS AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONGST UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF MEDICAL PROFESSION

### Community Medicine

**Dr. Radhe B. K.** Assistant Professor, Department of Community Medicine, RCSM GMC, Kolhapur, Maharashtra.

**Dr. Amrut Swami\*** Assistant Professor, Department of Community Medicine, RCSM GMC, Kolhapur, Maharashtra. \*Corresponding Author

### ABSTRACT

With increasing competition and the changing definitions of success people have lost their basic desire to be happy. The emotional component is being lost day by day and medical profession is not an exception. The emotional intelligence also can be measured like normal intelligence. The stress levels can also be measured by perceived stress. The aim of the present survey was to gain some understanding of stress and an evaluation of the role that emotional intelligence (EI) plays in the experience of perceived stress (PS) in the students of third year M.B.B.S. Questionnaires were distributed to all the students of third minor M.B.B.S., there were 92 complete responses amongst all 100 students. The mean age of students in our study was found to be 21 yrs, 43(46.73%) were male and 49(53.27%) were female. Majority were from urban area 79(86%). Higher stress level were seen in 52(56.52%) students who had perceived stress score more than 20. Of the 49 females, 34(70%) had higher stress levels and of the 43 males 30 (69%) were found to have higher stress score. The emotional intelligence score ranges from 79 to 136 for females. And among males it is 79 to 153.

### KEYWORDS

Emotional Intelligence, Perceived Stress, MBBS Students.

#### Introduction:

We humans are all emotional beings but in the race of life trying to fulfil our desires and to be on the top professions we are losing what was our own. The ability to be happy, the sense of contempt and also the power stability to face the outcomes of life and also to face the truth of life. So we see people who are in high positions who commit suicide are on treatment for depression. Why is this happening can we stop it?? Among the many factors which determine the mental wellbeing of the person most important is the emotional component, it can be measured by something called *emotional intelligence*. Next in line would be stress which could be measured by *perceived stress*. Many studies have reported that high levels of stress and psychological morbidity occur in students in the health care profession.

Stress has been defined as the strain that accompanies a demand perceived to be either challenging (positive) or threatening (negative) and, depending on the appraisal, may be either adaptive or debilitating. Perceived stress score was developed to measure the degree to which situations in one's life are appraised as stressful. It predicts both objective and biological markers of stress and increased risk for disease among persons with higher perceived stress levels<sup>(1)</sup>.

Emotional intelligence (EI) involves the perception, processing, regulation and management of emotions. It is "to be angry with the right person to the right degree at the right time for the right purpose and the right amount". It is also said that who fail to master the competencies of emotional intelligence face a spectrum of heightened psychiatric risks, this gives us an idea of how important it is. Higher EI is reported to positively contribute to the doctor-patient relationship, increased empathy, teamwork and communication skills, and stress management, organizational commitment and leadership. Thus, measures of EI correlate with many of the competencies that modern medical curricula seek to deliver. Emotional Intelligence consists of 5 main areas. Self-awareness, Managing emotions, Motivating oneself, Recognising emotions in others, Handling relationships<sup>(2)</sup>.

The aim of the present survey was to gain some understanding of stress and an evaluation of the role that emotional intelligence (EI) plays in the experience of perceived stress (PS). Doctors are seen in society as very stable people and are respected. The power to manage your emotions and respond to others emotions in stressful conditions, is important while dealing with the relatives of the patients. Present study finding will provide some insight for Indian Medical students' EI and Perceived stress.

#### Objectives

- To study the level of perceived stress and emotional intelligence in medical students.
- To study the association of emotional intelligence and perceived stress.

#### Methodology

**Study design:** Cross-sectional study

**Study period:** 1<sup>st</sup> Oct 2017 to 30 Nov 2017

**Study site:** R.C.S.M. Government Medical College, Kolhapur

**Sample size:** 92 (One whole admission batch of 2015 which currently is in 7<sup>th</sup> Semester (III/I) total 100 Questionnaires were distributed out of which 8 responses were incomplete, so total sample size = 92)

**Sampling method:** Universal sample

**Questionnaire:** The predesigned questionnaire consisted of the demographic profile. For emotional intelligence –Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Score. For perceived stress - PSS10 was used

**Data Collection:** With due informed consent anonymous questionnaire survey was conducted with due care to provide privacy and to maintain confidentiality.

**Statistical analysis:** Data was tabulated and analyzed by using SPSS version 16.

**Ethical Approval** was obtained from the college ethics committee and students willing to participate by giving written informed consent were included in the study.

#### Results

The mean age of students under study was found to be 21 yrs. Of the 92 students 43(46.73%) were male and 49(53.27%) were female. Majority were from urban area 79(86%). 52(56.52) had perceived stress score more than 20 which represents higher stress. (Figure 1) Of the 49 females 34(70%) had higher stress levels and of the 43 males 30 (69%) were found to have higher stress score. The emotional intelligence score ranges from 79 to 136 for females. And among males its 79 to 153. The table 1 shows average scores of perceived stress score and emotional intelligence score. Its seen that mean score of perceived stress among males and females were found to be 20.95 ± 3.65 and 20.95 ± 3.81 respectively. The mean score of emotional intelligence was found to be 129.65 ± 17.31 and 124.79 ± 11.06 among males and females respectively.

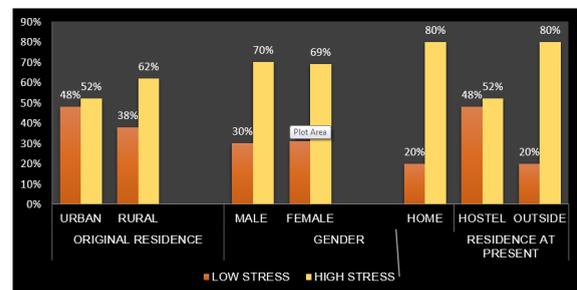
**Table no 1: Average scores of perceived stress and emotional intelligence.**

Factor	Sex	Mean score	Standard deviation
Perceived stress score	Male	20.95349	3.65331
	Female	20.95918	3.817036
Emotional intelligence score	Male	129.6512	17.31229
	Female	124.7959	11.06563

**Table no 2: Correlation Of Emotional Intelligence score With Perceived Stress Score.**

	Correlation Coefficient	p- value
Total emotional intelligence score	0.28	0.007
Perception of emotions	0.031	0.77
Managing own emotions	0.181	0.084
Managing others emotions	0.318	0.002
Utilization of emotions	0.197	0.59

The correlation between emotional intelligence, its components with perceived stress score shows correlation with total emotional intelligence score and managing others emotions and perceived stress score.



**Figure 1: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND PERCEIVED STRESS GRADING**

Proportion of students with higher stress score was seen more among rural students and males and students staying at home and outside than hostel.

**Conclusion**

- The mean stress score are high for both male and female students and indicates need for teaching stress management for medical students, especially during the exam terms.
- Students staying at home or in individual rooms may need additional support for stress management.
- EI scores were similar as in various studies and showed higher level of EI.

**Discussion**

In study by Joseph N et al, there were about 3% of students with low emotional intelligence, while in the current study, no student had lower emotional score. There is no sex wise significant difference among emotional intelligence score, which corresponds with similar study by Joseph. N et al. But many studies show higher EI scores in females.

Age wise differences in emotional intelligence could not be done as the study participants were from same age group. But in study by Joseph. N et al there is increase in emotional intelligence score along with increase in age.

In studies conducted by Joseph.N et al and Ebrahimi A, there is negative correlation between perceived stress and emotional intelligence but in current study there is positive correlation. Finding needs to be confirmed with a study with larger sample size. But in the study by Arora S et al, a positive correlation of PS and EI was found. Students with higher trait EI were more likely to experience stress but were also more likely to recover better compared with their lower-trait-EI peers

**Recommendations**

- Assessment of Emotional intelligence of medical student at admission to Medical College and provision of resources and support to improve their emotional intelligence.
- Regular assessment of stress in students and help them identify their problem areas and cope up with stress.
- Provide training about stress management to undergraduates.

**Limitations**

Future research should investigate the relationships of EI and PS with impact on lifestyle behaviors, academic and clinical performance, and health outcomes. As the study was conducted in small number of people the results may not be representative. The study was conducted during the exam going term so the level of perceived stress might be higher and routine times. Possibility of reporting bias.

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