



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Physiotherapy

THE IMPACT OF ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG THE PHYSIOTHERAPY COLLEGE STUDENTS- AN OBSERVATIONAL STUDY.

KEY WORDS: College students, academic stress, exams

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ABSTRACT

Stress is the non-specific response of the body to any demand (Hans Selye). Stress influences our mood, well-being, health and behaviour. The impact of stress is more in unhealthy subjects when compared to the healthy one. Academic stress is the universal problem encountered by most of the students irrespective of the countries, cultures, tradition and ethnic groups. Objective: the objective of this study is to find out whether the physiotherapy college students are experiencing academic stress. Methods: a self-administered questionnaire was given which consist of 11 questions related to their academics. Result: 94 out of 100 respondents expressed that they have academic stress and 64% felt stress as they can't able to live up to the own standards. Appropriate remedies should be taken to ensure that the students lead stress free college life.

INTRODUCTION:

Stress influences our mood, well-being, health and behaviour. The impact of stress is more in unhealthy subjects when compared to the healthy one. It is experienced by almost everyone at least once in their life time. Stress is the non-specific response of the body to any demand (Hans Selye). Selye proposed that the stress was present with every people throughout the entire period of life to a nonspecific demand. Maish and Gulrez (2006), stated that stress as a lifestyle crisis affecting all individuals irrespective of their developmental stage, Banerjee and Chatterjee (2016).

Adolescence is defined as the physical maturation of the body and mind, leading to intensive changes both physically and psychologically. It is the most common period of intense emotional experience, psychiatric illness (Kessler et al., 2005). A careful management of this critical period is very important to have a proper social, physical, psychological development. People from 12 -25 years old suffer from certain psychological health issues (Grebott et al., 2005). This would be reflected in certain ways like depression, anxiety, stress, and sleeping disorders (Lejoyeux et al., 2011).

The college life is the memorable period in the life span of an individual. The ambient atmosphere, new group of friends, involvement in various co-curricular activities, exposure to different areas of academic subjects will enrich them and makes this period a unique one. There will be difference between the expectations and perceptions of the college environment. Academic stress is the universal problem encountered by most of the students irrespective of the countries, cultures, tradition and ethnic groups. The students experience stress due to competition, future employment, examinations, disappointments, expectations, lack of confidence.

Academic stress makes the students to perceive the college life as less joyful period. At the same time, mild strain is appreciable because it will prepare the student to put more effort and results in good outcome. On the other hand, too much pressor or stress in academic will end up in anxiety and depression. Raina, (1889), stated that the inability to perform in turn led to a greater sense of distress.

Previously, educational system was focused only on the study, but now the entire scenario is changed. The students are under continued stress of future employment, spending more time in social networks, poor time management, lack of coping skills & parental guidance. Ang & Huan (2006) stated the increased expectations as one of the factors responsible for increased stress level. Greenberg (1996) concluded in his study that making new friends in one of the causative factors of stress amongst college students.

The following are few main stressors faced by most of the college students. First, the new environment for the students which is entirely different from the school. Second, the lack of confidence

plays a very important role because it leads to examination failures, coping up skills. Thirdly, as the students are not able to fulfil their own expectation level, it will lead to disappointments. Fourth, at last the students are well stressed due to future employment after graduation. The main purpose of this study is to find out which factors are responsible as stressor to the college student & to evaluate which one of the above-mentioned criteria are experienced high among the college students. The results of this study will give us foresight about the remedies to be carried out to reduce the stress experienced by them.

Materials and methods:

Total of 100 physiotherapy students from first year to final years both male and female within the age group 17-21 years were selected for this observational study. A self-designed survey questions were adopted; the students were instructed to mention yes or no to the given questions. Which mainly focuses on future employment, failure to maintain their own standards and competition. It consists of Eleven questions as follows.

- I. I feel a lot of pressure in my daily studying
- II. There is too much competition among classmates which brings me a lot of academic pressure
- III. Future education and employment brings me a lot of academic pressure.
- IV. I feel there is too much homework
- V. I feel that there are too many tests/exams in the college.
- VI. I feel that I have disappointed my teacher when my test/exam results are not ideal
- VII. I feel stressed when I do not live up to my own standards
- VIII. I fail to live up to my own expectations
- IX. I always lack confidence with my academic scores
- X. I am very dissatisfied with academic grades
- XI. It is very difficult to concentrate during classes.

Results:

Table I shows the total number of students experiencing stress in the academic. Table II shows the number of students responded yes for the given eleven academic stress related questions. 47% of students said yes to the question stating that I feel a lot of pressure in my daily studying. Only 24% students claimed that the competition among classmates brings them a lot of academic pressure. 5th highest percentage (55%) students faced stress due to thought of future educations and employment. Least percentage (20%) of students expressed that there is too much home work. 25% of students tells that there is too much competition among the classmates. 45 % of students feels that they have disappointed the class teacher when the exam test results are not ideal. The highest percentage of students (64%) expressed that they are highly stressed when they do not live up to their own standards, and 62 % students said they are dissatisfied because of the academic grades.

Tables: I - Total number of students with and without stress

No of students surveyed	Students with stress	Students without stress
100	94	6

Figures: I – Total no of students surveyed for stress and no of students with and without stress

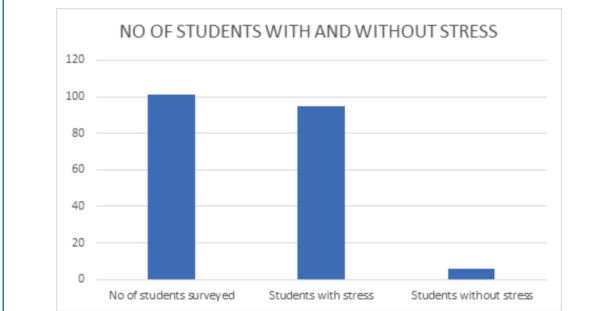
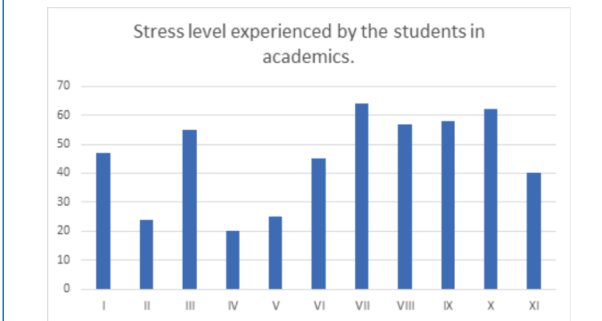


Table: II – Total number of students responded yes to the given questions

S. NO	Questions	No of students responded yes out of 100
I	I feel a lot of pressure in my daily studying	47
II	There is too much competition among classmates which brings me a lot of academic pressure	24
III	Future education and employment brings me a lot of academic pressure.	55
IV	I feel there is too much homework	20
V	I feel that there are too many test/exams in college	25
VI	I feel that I have disappointed my teacher when my test/exams are not ideal	45
VII	I feel stressed when stressed when I do not live up to my own standards	64
VIII	I fail to live up to my own expectations	57
IX	I always lack confidence with my academic scores	58
X	I am very dissatisfied with academic grades	62
XI	It is very difficult to concentrate during classes	40

Figure: II- Stress experienced by college students



Discussion:

The everyday stress will change the routine life of all the individuals. According to this study, the future employment stands the first in the cause of stress among the college students. The fact that there is increased proportion of unemployment among the professionals. Gumustekin et al., (2009), found out that the individual stress factors individual qualities, talents, age, gender,

level of education, community background, societal status and communal stress such as organization, politics, organizational processes, working environment are responsible for this. Around 60% of students are working in a part-time job before completing their course, so they can able to visualize the present job scenario and the career completion. This will highly impact their perception about the fear of permanent placement of the job. In addition to it, the students will always have a conflict within them whether to opt job or enrol in the respective post-graduation courses.

The second most percentage of cause of stress (62%) is dissatisfied with academic grades. Drop-outs in university students frequently occur due to inability to cope up with the higher standards of education in college. Even it will lead to suicidal thoughts when there is reduced motivational level among the students. Sohail, (2013) stated that the higher level of stress is associated with poor academic performance. Other factors include high parental expectation, frequency of examinations, vast academic curriculum, low self-esteem, decreased motivational level, lack of proper guidance. 58% of students feels that they lack confidence with their academic grades. Overall the students were experiencing stress due to their academics.

Conclusion:

The measures should be taken to reduce the stress faced by the college students. Implementing counselling sessions and mentoring systems will provide a solution to the students. And a change in the curriculum is needed to address this issue. Further studies are needed to know the depth of the stress and remedies for it.

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