

# A Descriptive Study to Assess the Level of Stress and Coping Strategies Adopted by 1st Year B.Sc (N) Students

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**Abstract:- Background:** During education and training, nursing students are repeatedly exposed to various stressors. They may directly or indirectly affect their learning. **Objective:** This study was conducted to assess the stress level and coping strategies adopted by 1st year Basic B.Sc nursing students at College of Nursing, Adesh University, Bathinda. **Design:** A descriptive study design was used. **Sample;** 59 B.Sc nursing students studying at the College of Nursing, Adesh University, Bathinda. **Methods:** A self-administrative survey including demographics, Perceived Stress Scale and Coping Behaviour Inventory was used. **Results:** The findings showed the majority of the Students were between 17-19 years of age. The 3 common stressful clinical areas experienced by nursing students were: (1) Casualty & emergency unit (76.27%), (2) Surgical Wards (13.56%), (3) Operation Theatre (3.39%), overall, students experienced a moderate level of stress (mean=52, SD=15.07). Out of 59 Students, 47 (79.66%) students have moderate stress and The common type of stressor identified by students was from taking care of patients (mean=12.32, SD=5.34). Problem solving coping strategies (mean=14.64, SD=3.01) and avoidance coping strategies (mean=10.15, SD= 4.00) were commonly used by students and they found these are effective in handling stress in hospital training. **Interpretation & Conclusion:** The findings provided valuable data for nursing teachers at college as well as hospital in finding student's problems, reason for stress and coping strategies.

**Keywords:-** Stress, Coping, Coping Strategies, Nursing Students.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Everyone face stress in daily life. Nursing students may face interpersonal and environmental stresses. Stress is advantages and disadvantages for students, it depends on how nursing students experience and overcome. During stress students feel distress and emotional affected while on the other hand, stress motivate and evoke the students for more upholding and persistence in their study in order to achieve their goal or aim.<sup>1</sup>

Stress in nursing is identified as one of the most important issues in the present world. Psycho-social stress is a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being.<sup>2</sup>

Students experience many stressors and they face different challenges in day to day life. Nursing students are more likely to experience even more stress compare to other students. Many researchers have recorded perceived stress levels are more in nursing students. Since because of transitional pattern of college, nursing students are at high risk to experience stress. Students' health and academical activities also get affected from high levels of stress.<sup>3,4,5</sup> Students should learn, how to cope with a stressful situation, that will also helpful for their life and career. By prioritising the requirements, planning in advance, well organization, can reduce the effect of stress. Coping is defined as cognitive and behavioural efforts, a person adopts to handle stress, these efforts are emotional and problem focused coping.<sup>6</sup>

Coping is a dynamic and ongoing process and the main aim is survival, growth and maintenance of the individual integrity. Nursing student should always make an attempt to restore the balance within his or her by adjustment by the use of different coping efforts. It is necessary for the nursing teachers to identify the main causes for stress and coping strategies to be adopted by the students, so that it will help the students to cope with problems in their life.

➤ *Purpose of the Study:*

Academic stress (10% to 30%), is identified as more significant psychological health problem in these years and is faced by maximum young adolescents. More detailed information, more expectation, learning pressure, high ambitions, lack of opportunities, competition in the outer world are main causes for stress, fear and anxiety.<sup>7</sup>

Students come across and experience many stressors like academic pressure, parent's pressure to get success, future life and difficulties in handling situations along with these, the other problems faced by students are physical, social, emotional and family problems, these problems affect their academic ability. In these days and years nursing training students are experiencing more stressors and stress specially first year or newly admitted students.<sup>8</sup>

Hence college faculty and clinical instructors should have a clear understanding of stress and stressors in nursing students, their emotional wellbeing, and what kind of coping strategies they have adopted to overcome from stress. This helps teachers and trainers to find effective stress management strategies and even they can teach these techniques to students as well. Researcher found few studies regarding assessment of stress level and coping methods among college of nursing, Adesh University B.Sc nursing students. Therefore researcher took an initiative to assess students stress levels, the types of stressors they come across and coping strategies adopted by them during clinical or hospital training.

➤ *Significance & Scope of the Study:*

Nursing students are future human resources. Identification of potential stress is very important since stress can cause low production, standard of life, and suicidal thoughts. Identification of potential stress factors also helps nursing faculty to find approaches to reduce stress.

During the GNM program, the researchers experienced a lot of stressful situations and fearful moments. Those eventful days were questionable coping pattern and which adversely affected the physical strength and emotional stability and academic activities. Many students were experiencing the same situation, the researchers understood that stress experienced by B.Sc Nursing I<sup>st</sup> year student nurse produces certain behavioral and emotional responses. Therefore, based on life experiences, evidences, the researcher showed interest in identifying the stress experienced and coping strategies adopted by first year basic baccalaureate nursing students. So that, students can be helped with appropriate coping methods if they are stressful.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted to assess sources of stress and coping strategies among nursing students studying at Iran faculty of nursing. 366 students were participated in the study. 'The Student Stress Survey' and 'the adolescent coping orientation for problem experiences inventory' were used for data collection. The study results proved the common stressors were increased class workload and clinical exposure. The conclusion of the study was, first year nursing students are more exposed stressors and 'student support system' is necessary for them for effective coping.<sup>9</sup>

An experimental study was carried out to determine the effect of a stress management and personal and professional stressors experienced, and coping strategies used by 30 female graduate nursing students. The stress management program consisted of practice of relaxation, imagery, and diaphragmatic breathing. The method of study consisted BP measurements, weekly Palmar Sweat Prints and a weekly Self- Report. The result indicated the control group reported significantly less strategies for coping with stress than the experimental group.<sup>10</sup>

A study was conducted at Ramban medical centre, Israel to find out nursing student's perceptions of stress in their initial clinical area experience. The method adopted was exploratory longitudinal study by using stress scale which include six subscales. The stress scale was administered three times during the clinical experience to 46 students. The result revealed that, there is significant difference in pre-clinical and clinical area stress level.<sup>11</sup>

A comparative study was conducted in Scotland to assess the level of affective distress, stress sources and coping strategies adopted by first year nursing students. information was collected by using 30 General Health Questionnaire (30-item version), the Beck and Srivastava Stress Inventory and a modified 'ways of Coping Questionnaire'. The result revealed that 50.5% of students in Cohort 1(n=109, week 40) and 67.9% of students in Cohort 2 (n=111, week 24) suffered from significant affective distress.<sup>12</sup>

A co-relational study was conducted in China to explore the factors affecting psychological status, stress, coping style and social support of the 288 nursing student's during initial clinical practice and assessed by 'adopting college seniors stress scale', 'coping style questionnaire' and 'support questionnaire'. The result of the study showed, positive correlations between stressful events and negative coping style. The study concluded that, improving the psychological condition of nursing students, enhancing the social support, encouraging them to adopt positive coping style is necessary.<sup>13</sup>

A comparative study study was conducted in U.S.A to identify 107 Junior baccalaureate nursing student's perceived stressors and ways of using different coping strategies of different ethnic background during the first

clinical course. The results of the study revealed that, students utilized problem solving and seeking social support more frequently as coping strategies than tension reduction and avoidance as emotion-focused coping strategies. The study concluded that, both Caucasian and African-American students use more problem-focused than emotion-focused coping strategies.<sup>14</sup>

**III. OBJECTIVES**

- To assess the level of stress among first year B.Sc Nursing students.
- To identify the coping strategies students frequently use to relieve their stress

**IV. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

- *Research Approach:*  
Descriptive research approach.
- *Research Design:*  
Descriptive research design.
- *Research Setting:*  
College of Nursing, Adesh University, Bathinda.
- *Research Variables:*
  - *Independent Variable:*  
In this study, Level of stress and coping strategies is the independent variable.
  - *Dependent Variable:*  
Student nurses in first year BSc nursing, Socio demographic variable is the dependent variable in this study.
- *Population:*
  - *Target Population:*  
All First year Basic B.Sc nursing students.
  - *Accessible Population:*  
59 First year BSc nursing students studying at College of Nursing, Adesh University, Bathinda, who fulfill the inclusive criteria.
- *Sample and Sampling Technique:*
  - *Sample:*  
In this study First year Basic B.Sc nursing students are samples.
  - *Sampling Technique:*  
In this study Non probability convenient sampling is used for the selection of subject.
- *Sample Size:*  
The sample size of the study constitutes 59 First year B.Sc nursing students (n=59).

- *Method of Data Collection:*  
Consisted of three parts of self-report survey:
  - Part 1. Students’ demographic information
  - Part 2. Perceived stress scale (PSS)
  - Part 3. Coping behaviour inventory (CBI)

**V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Socio Demographic Variables	N	%
<b>1. Age in Years</b>		
a. 16-17years.	5	8.47
b. 17-18 years.	24	40.68
c. 18-19 years.	23	38.98
d. 19-20 years.	7	11.86
<b>2. Gender</b>		
a. Male	3	5.08
b. Female	56	94.92
<b>3. Religion</b>		
a. Sikh	58	98.31
b. Hindu	1	1.69
<b>4. Type of the Family</b>		
a. Nuclear Family	37	62.71
b. Joint Family	22	37.29
<b>5. Economical status of the Family per month in Rs.</b>		
a. Rs. 0-10,000	18	30.51
b. Rs. 10,001-20,000	21	35.59
c. Rs. 20,001-30,000	9	15.25
d. Rs. 30,001-40,000	11	18.64
<b>6. Most stressful clinical area</b>		
a. Casualty and Emergency	45	76.27
b. Operation Theatre	2	3.39
c. Medical Wards	1	1.69
d. Surgical Wards	8	13.56
e. OPD	1	1.69
f. Others	2	3.39

Table 1:- Socio demographic variables of First Year Basic B.Sc Nursing Students. (N=59)

Table 1, shows Distribution of socio demographic variables of respondents. Majority of the Students were between 17-19 years of age and their mean age is 17.5, with a range of 16-25. Considering their gender the majorities were female (94.92%). Considering their religion, majority of the Students were Sikh (98.31%), On the type of family, majority of them belong to nuclear family such as 62.71%. With regard to their Family Income, majority Family Income is between Rs. 10,000-20,000.



Fig 1:- Distribution of Respondents by Most Stressful Clinical Area of First Year B.Sc Nursing Students

Figure 1, shows the most stressful clinical areas identified by students of nursing. The following 3 areas were found most stressful in clinical area:

- Casualty & emergency (76.27%)
- Surgical Wards (13.56%)
- Operation Theatre (3.39%)

Sl.No.	Level of stress	N	%
1	Mild or lower level of stress	11	18.64
2	Moderate stress	47	79.66
3	Severe or higher level of stress.	01	1.70

Table 2:- Distribution of Respondents by Stress Level among First Year Basic B.Sc (N), (N=59)

Out of 59 Students, 11(18.64%) students have mild stress, 47 (79.66%) students have moderate stress and only one (1.70%) student have severe stress.

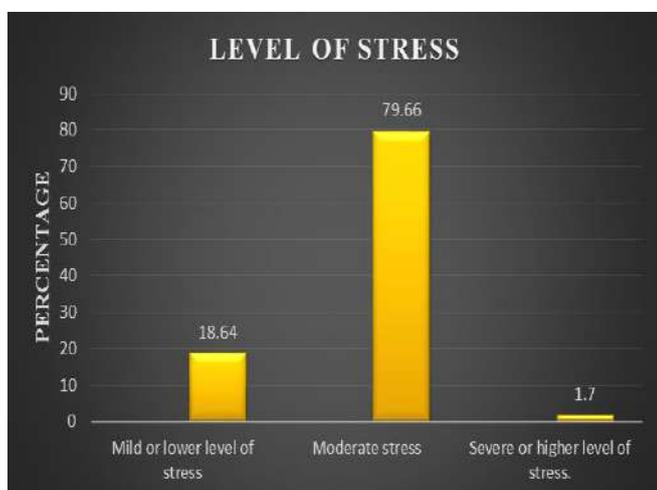


Fig 2:- Distribution of Respondents by Stress Level among First Year Basic B.Sc (N).

Sl.No.	Stressors	Rank	Mean	SD
1	Taking care of patients	1	12.32	5.34
2	Assignments and workload	2	11.15	3.39
3	Teachers and nursing staff	3	10.71	3.70
4	Peers and daily life	4	7.27	2.94
5	Clinical environment	5	5.14	2.27
6	Lack of professional knowledge and skills	6	5.64	2.11

Table 3:- Stressors Identified by Students (N=59)

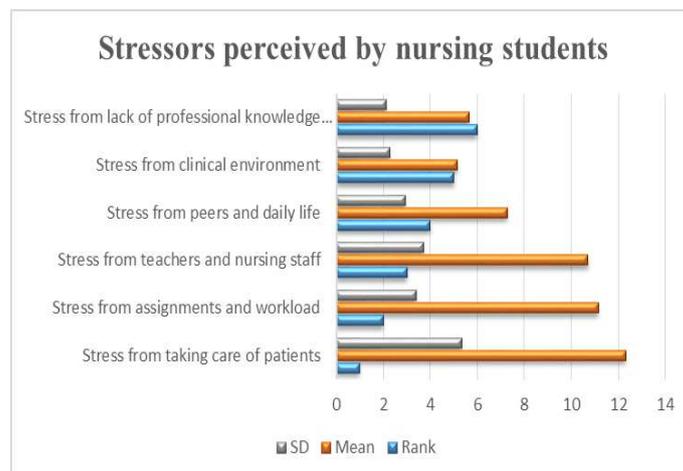


Fig 3:- Perceived Stressors

Stress from taking care of patients identified as common type of stressor experienced by students (mean=12.32, SD=5.34). ‘Stress from assignments and workload is the next most common stressors experienced by students (mean=11.15, SD=3.39) and ‘Stress from teachers and nursing staff is third common factor. (mean=10.71, SD=3.70).

Sl.No.	Coping behavior	N	%
1	Poor usage and effectiveness	19	32.20
2	More frequent usage and greater effectiveness	40	67.80

Table 4:- Distribution of Respondents by Coping Strategies Frequently Used and their Effectiveness (N=59)

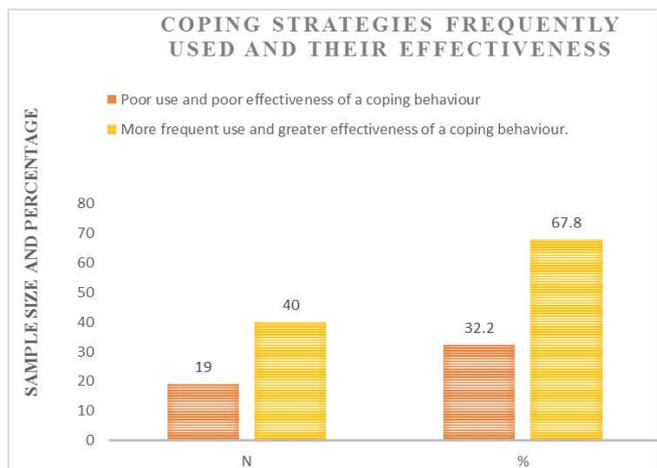


Fig 4:- Distribution of Respondents by Coping Strategies Frequently Used and their Effectiveness

Out of 59 Students 19(32.20 %) Students have Poor usage and poor effectiveness of a coping behaviour and 40 (67.80 %) students have more frequent usage and greater effectiveness of a coping behavior.

Sl.No.	Coping strategies	Rank	Mean	SD
1	Problem solving	1	14.64	3.01
2	Avoidance	2	10.15	4.00
3	Staying optimistic	3	9.85	2.30
4	Transference	4	5.68	2.53

Table 5:- Distribution of Subjects by Method of Coping Strategies Used More Frequently and their Effectiveness

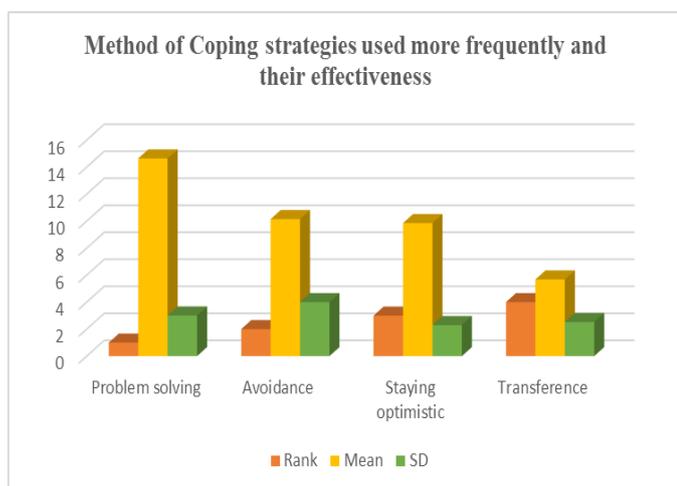


Fig 5:- Distribution of Subjects by Method of Coping Strategies Used More Frequently and their Effectiveness

The most commonly observed coping strategy was problem solving (mean=14.64, SD=3.01) and avoidance (mean=10.15, SD= 4.00), followed by staying optimistic (mean=9.85, SD=2.30), the most and least effective coping strategies transference (mean=5.68, SD=2.53)

## VI. CONCLUSION

From the above mentioned results, it is clear that students perceived moderate levels of stress and they are using problem solving and avoidance strategy to cope with their stress. Clinical instructors can help their students by encouraging problem solving and through open communication, so that level of stress can be reduced. The findings provided valuable data for nursing teachers at college as well as hospital in finding student’s problems, reason for stress and coping strategies.

## VII. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study have scope in the following areas:

### ➤ Nursing Education

- Teaching faculty should study about their students, who are having stress, what may be the cause, how they are coping with it.
- Teachers should use different principles method of teaching and learning, like teaching from simple to complex, by conducting short test, encouraging and motivating to learn and practice skills and
- Teacher should provide sufficient time and opportunity for students to learn and practice.
- Teachers should evaluate the student’s readiness, before placing them in clinical area.
- Guidance, counselling, support, positive reinforcement, Constructive feedback should be provided to students during clinical training.
- The results of the study may increase students’ knowledge on common stressors and what kinds of coping strategy might relieve their stress in clinical.
- Student should know how to balance between study and co-curricular activities.
- Students, who are optimistic and having positive values, social support, might help them deal with stress.
- Assignments for students should be given part by part instead of giving as whole.

### ➤ Nursing Practice

- Hospital staffs can develop good professional rapport with students, who are practicing in the wards.
- Clinical instructors can create a cooperative climate for the learners in the hospital.
- Hospital staff should provide information regarding hospital and wards practices to the students
- Proper guidance should be given to the students regarding nursing concepts, procedures, patient care and feedback should be provided to improve the performance.
- Staffs should motivate students to learn clinical aspects.
- Students should be provided more time in hospital instead of scheduling them for short time.

➤ *Nursing Administration*

- Students should be counselled and trained before placing them in clinical areas.
- Teacher should have a good professional relationship with students by using listening, communication skills and techniques.
- The study helps the nursing manager to initiate and carry out Guidance and counseling in college of nursing and also in health care settings.

➤ *Nursing Research*

- This study emphasizes the need for further research on different variables.
- Study results will be reference for future studies.
- Stress and Scales Used by the researcher will be helpful for assessing stress and coping of any grades of nursing students.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- A comparative study may be conducted between two different nursing batches or groups or grades on large scale.

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