

A Cross Sectional Study: Campus Education and Stress among Students

Jill Gada*, Srinivas Ravi, Rashmi Thakur

Department of Microbiology, K.J. Somaiya College of Science and Commerce, Vidyavihar, Mumbai, India

*Corresponding author

Jill Gada

Article History

Received: 05.07.2018

Accepted: 16.07.2018

Published: 30.08.2018



Abstract: College life, being one of the most enriching and wonderful days of life can get dented by depression, anxiety and stress. Students are probable to experience stressors which may test their ability to cope: adapting to a new environment, balancing a heavy workload, making new friends, becoming more independent, and dealing with myriad of other issues. These can at times lead to detrimental consequences on the individual's health. The present study examines the sources and effects of stress on the students due to campus education system. Out of the 500 respondents 80.2 % of the people were found to be stressed due to campus education. Various factors caused stress among students, huge syllabus and reservation based admission to be at the top of the list. The various ways of managing stress and the effect on a person's health was also studied. It was concluded that measures like providing more practical knowledge to the students, removing the caste system based admission and mandatory council are some of the ways which the education committee must implement in order to reduce stress.

Keywords: Stress, academics, anxiety, students, campus education.

INTRODUCTION

Stress is a set of circumstances which causes a state of mental, emotional strain and/or tension to an individual [1]. It is also known as a negative, cognitive, behavioural and physiological condition which affects an individual's physical, mental, as well as social health [3].

In India, almost 15 million people suffer from serious psychiatric illness and nearly 30 million from mild psychiatric problems [2]. In the present era stress has become a normal part of life. Today people belonging to all age groups are stressed in some way or another.

There may be different kinds of stress which may affect a person. The three main kinds of stress are acute stress, episodic stress and chronic stress. The reason for these kinds of stress may be social causes or personal issues, financial matters or even academic stress. The current study focuses on the aspect of academic stress among students.

Academic Stress

College life of a student is usually one of the most scintillating and memorable part of the life. The adolescent experience various joyful moments, makes new friends, and also enjoys many academic and co-curricular activities. Although the college life has many joy filled moments at times it also gives students many negative effects mainly causing stress. The stress in a students' life while studying is referred to as an academic stress [12]. The academic stress is outlined as the anxiety and stress that happens as a result of education or alternative aspects concerned while studying a particular course at a University. The

students experience plenty of stressful conditions while pursuing any course. A variety of activities such as studying, completing homework, completion of notes, preparing for tests; laboratory work, reading etc. are to be performed by the students. Time management becomes difficult task for students interested in participating in extracurricular activities [3, 2, 16].

Sources: Excessive study on various aspects of academic stress have been carried out over a long time and the researchers have identified the common stressors as work overload, excessive competition among students, failure, poor interpersonal relationships with professors and/or students, ragging and preparing for certain special exams like entrance exams *et al.* [15, 7]. Stressors however, differ in degree of severity and duration; from individual to individual. It is observed that students experience stress at various times of the semester. The greatest sources of academic stress found to be exam preparations, grade competition, and the large amount of syllabus to be covered in a small amount of time [3, 8, 12].

Effects: The effects of stress may be varied among individuals. The effects range from mild like having headaches to severe effects like depression and having suicidal thoughts. In an interview of 1,249 college students, 6% reported having suicidal ideation,

and low social support was a predictor to suicidal ideation[22]. Stress can possibly arouse anxious thoughts, or cause difficulty to concentrate[20, 18]. It can also lead to change in people’s behaviours, such as nail biting, heavy breathing, teeth clenching and hand wringing. Sometimes people may feel cold hands and feet, butterflies in stomach, and sometimes-increased heart rate too during stressful situations[3]. Students at this level may occasionally experience incompatibility of their mental development with their physical changes or with social environment and thus suffer from problems arising from inadequate adaptation. These problems may also cause psychological issues and even lead to aberrant behaviours [9, 19].

Stress may also cause people to get addicted to bad habits like Alcohol consumption, Drugs intake, smoking and indulging in other illegal practices. It is reported, that in India a majority (nearly 5,500) of children and adolescents begin the daily usage of tobacco products at a very young age at times even before 18 years of age[12]. According to a study performed in Bhubaneswar around 72% of stressed students were found to smoke cigarettes, about 68% consumed alcohol, 24% consumed ghutka and 23% were involved in drug intake[4].

Coping strategies

Due to the harmful effects caused by stress, it thus becomes important to manage stress. Effective time management, social support, positive reappraisal, and engagement in leisure pursuits are some common methods which can help the students reduce stress. In the last few years a lot of work is being tried out like

organizing workshops and training in order to train people to cope with stress [19, 11, 18, 21] In the following study various aspects related to academic stress among students were analysed.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

An exploratory case study was performed by the students of Department of Microbiology at K. J. Somaiya College of Science and Commerce, Vidyavihar, Mumbai, India. 500 students belonging to various Universities across India were selected as subjects for the study. The study was conducted by distributing a hard copy of questionnaire and electronic via Google forms.

The following questions were prepared and the subjects were asked to fill in the details:

Questions

- Have you ever been stressed?
- What are the common factors that cause stress?
- Which aspects of education cause stress the most?
- Frequency of being stress may be?
- How do you think people manage their stress?
- Various consequences faced due to stress may be...
- Ways to avoid stress can be...
- What major steps can be taken by the educational committee to prevent stress among students?

The data was analysed using Microsoft excel sheet.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Have you ever been stressed?

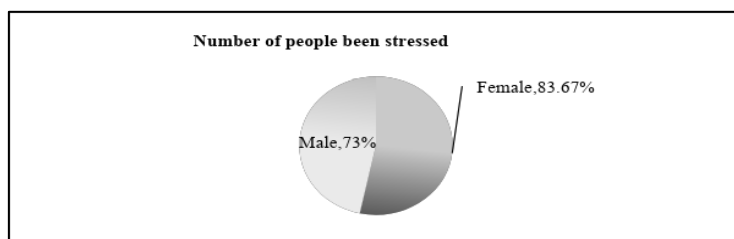


Fig-1: Number of people who are stressed

Which aspects of education cause stress the most?

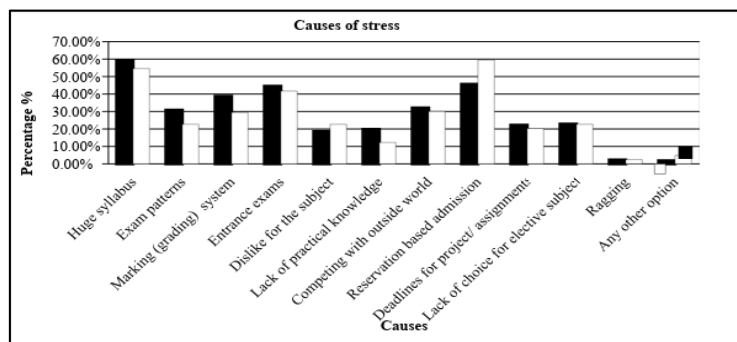


Fig-2: Causes of stress among students

Ways of managing stress

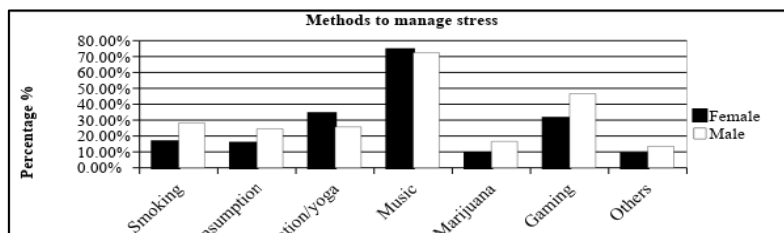


Fig-3: Methods used by students to manage stress

Consequences of stress

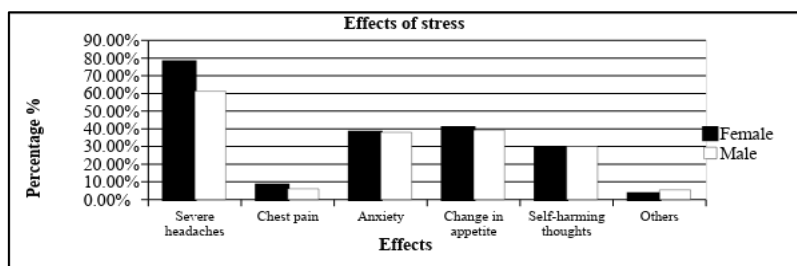


Fig-4: Effects of stress on the health of an individual

Major steps that can be taken by educational committee to avoid stress

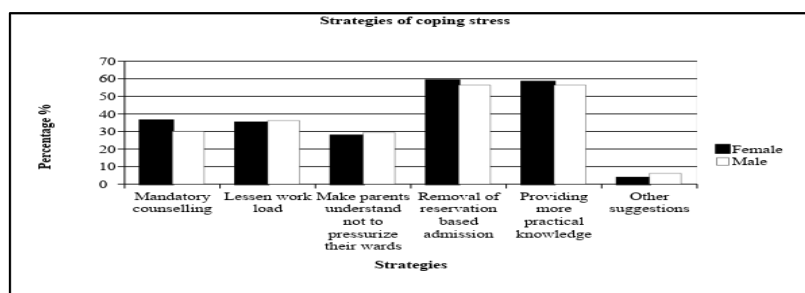


Fig-5: Strategies to be taken by the education committee to reduce stress among students

DISCUSSION

Stress is supposed to be known as a fuel in our lives which the body uses for meeting the challenges of our fast modern life. However stress is good only if it boosts our performance. When stress causes negative effects it must be handled carefully. Stress is caused by various aspects. In this study we have aimed to study the causes, effects and methods of managing stress on personal as well as institutional level. The response of 500 students belonging to various universities across India for the prepared questionnaire was collected. It included 337 female students and 167 male students. Of those, 83.67% of the female students while only 73% of male the students felt stressed due to campus education. A study conducted by J. K. Akande *et al.*, 2014, suggests that academic stress has been the most significant form of stress in students. It also states the same that female students were more stressed than males because of an emotion factor being more prevalent in females.

An attempt was made to determine the factors causing academic stress amongst students and from the various causes like Exam patterns, Competing with outside world, Huge syllabus to be studied, Entrance exams, Reservation based admissions, Ragging etc., it was found that huge syllabus to be studied was the most stress causing factor for females while Reservation based admission caused severe stress among males, followed by preparation for entrance exams also as a major factor. In a study performed by Saritha Desai *et al.*, 2015 in Coimbatore, 85.71% female students and 78.04% males pursuing third year degree courses felt stressed. Stress from high expectations of teachers (67%), parents (83%) and self (52%) were seen to be the main causes of stress for students studying in colleges [25].

The various methods by which the students manage their stress were also studied. The ways studied were of two types that is using positive coping strategies and negative coping strategies. The positive strategies included meditation/yoga, listening to music

and other ways like talking to someone, or pursuing a hobby. While the negative ways of managing stress include alcohol consumption, smoking, drug abuse or excessive gaming and spending time on internet. It was observed that amongst the positive strategy both the male and female students listen to music for reducing stress while amongst the negative strategy 46% males and 31% females use excessive gaming. 16% females and 28% males use smoking as a medium to relieve stress whereas 15% females and 24% males also consume alcohol for reducing stress. Also around 16% males said that they consume drugs to get rid of stress.

The effects of stress caused on a person's health and behaviour was also analysed. 77% females and 61% males suffered from severe headaches, 40% females and 39% males observed change in their appetite. Around 38% of females and males both experienced anxiety and also 30% people of both the gender had self-harming thoughts. In a study performed by Joseph Agolla *et al.* University of Botswana, it was seen that stress among students has been associated with issues such as suicides, violent behaviour or even social withdrawal[11].

The students were also asked about the various ways which should be used by the educational institution in order to reduce the stress level among students. Around 59% females and 56% males feel that providing more practical knowledge and removal of reservation based admission are the main ways to reduce stress among students. Also 36% females and 30% males feel lessening the workload and mandatory counselling will help reduce the amount of stress.

CONCLUSION

Stress is a necessary and unavoidable phenomenon occurring in our daily lives. It is necessary because without any stress we would be lifeless and apathetic creatures as it relates to any external event be it pleasurable or a hypochondrial sporulator. However, in the study carried out, 80.2% out of the 500 students were found to be stressed. The female students were found to be more stressed than males. Huge syllabus & reservation based system for admission were seen to be the major causes of stress in males and females students respectively. The leading consequence due to stress was headache in both the sexes. Also self-harming thoughts were found to be one of the reasons as a result of stress. On surveying the measures used by them to outcome stress, music was found to be the most appropriate solution by both the groups of individuals shadowed by meditation & games. Most of the males and females feel that removal of reservation based admission should be done in order to manage and prevent stress & also providing practical knowledge to the students will help students compete in the world and thus avoid stress conditions. From the overall canvas dealt and the results cadged, it can be concluded that stress among students, although common, has to be taken care off at the correct

time to prevent students from taking life threatening decisions leading to intense consequences. They should be taught to be as positive so that they don't lose hope and face even the difficult situations in life, very easily and smartly. Parents should note that any problems arising as a result of internal conflicts or any other reason should not affect their ward which may affect their mental thoughts. A good guidance is always a helpful measure to alleviate students while stressed. Encouraging them to indulge in other activities which may help them explore their unknown talents also helps to relieve them from yips. Also, the education board should look out the cases of stressed students and help them accordingly in all the possible ways it can.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would wholeheartedly thank our Head of Department Mrs Shailaja Girishankar for supporting us throughout the study.

REFERENCES

1. Stress. Definition of stress in English by Oxford Dictionaries. *Oxford Dictionaries. English*. 2017. Available at: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/stress>.
2. Singh BP. Study and analysis of academic stress of B. Ed. students. *International Journal of Educational Planning & Administration*. 2011 Feb;1(2):119-27.
3. PRABU P. A Study on Academic Stress among Higher Secondary Students. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*. 2015; 4(10):63-68.
4. Padhy G, Das S. Prevalence and Causes of Substance Abuse among Undergraduate Medical College Students. *Indian Medical Gazette*. 2014.
5. Venkatarao E, Iqbal S, Gupta S. Stress, anxiety & depression among medical undergraduate students & their socio-demographic correlates. *Indian Journal of Medical Research*. 2015; 141(3):354.
6. Melaku L, Mossie A, Negash A. Stress among Medical Students and Its Association with Substance Use and Academic Performance. *Journal of Biomedical Education*. 2015; 2015:1-9.
7. Bataineh M. Academic Stress among Undergraduate Students: The Case of Education Faculty at King Saud University. *International Interdisciplinary Journal of Education*. 2013; 2(1):82-88.
8. In IJ. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, Volume 3, Issue 4, No. 68. RED'SHINE Publication. Inc; 2016 Sep 30.
9. Khan M, Altaf S. Effect of Perceived Academic Stress on Students' Performance. *FWU Journal of Social Sciences*. 2013; 7(2):146-151.
10. Akande J, Olowonirejuaro D, Okwara-Kalu D. A Study of Level and Sources of Stress among Secondary School Students. *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSRJRME)*. 2014; 4(5):32-36.

11. Agolla J, Ongori H. An assessment of academic stress among undergraduate students: The case of University of Botswana. *Educational Research and Review*. 2009; 4:063-070.
12. Pariat M, Rynjah M, Joplin M, Kharjana M. Stress Levels of College Students: Interrelationship between Stressors and Coping Strategies. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. 2014; 19(8):40-45.
13. Thawabieh A, Qaisy L. Assessing Stress among University Students. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*. 2012; 2(2):260-268.
14. Teh C, Ngo C, Zulkifli R, Vellasamy R, Suresh K. Depression, Anxiety and Stress among Undergraduate Students: A Cross Sectional Study. *Open Journal of Epidemiology*. 2015; 05(04):260-268.
15. Baskar D. A Conceptual Analysis on Stress among College Students. *Paripex - Indian journal of research*. 2015; 4(8).
16. Yumba W. Academic Stress: A Case of the Undergraduate students. 2008.
17. Essel G and Owusu P. 2017. Available at: <https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/124792/Thesis%20Document.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> [Accessed 10 May 2018].
18. Pfeiffer D. Academic and Environmental Stress among Undergraduate and Graduate College Students. The Graduate School University of Wisconsin-Stout,(December, 2001). 2001 Dec.
19. Sarita S. Academic stress among students: role and responsibilities of parents. *International Journal of Applied Research*. 2015;1(10):385-8.
20. Ghatol SD. Academic Stress among Higher Secondary School Students: A Review. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Education & Technology (IJARET)*. 2017;4(1):38-41.
21. Nandamuri P, Gowthami C. Sources of academic stress—A study on management students.2011.
22. Chao RC. Managing perceived stress among college students: The roles of social support and dysfunctional coping. *Journal of College Counseling*. 2012 Apr;15(1):5-21.
23. Nikitha S, Jose TT, Valsaraj BP. A correlational study on academic stress and self-esteem among higher secondary students in selected schools of Udipi district. *Nitte University Journal of Health Science*. 2014 Mar 1;4(1):106.
24. Kai-Wen C. A study of stress sources among college students in Taiwan. *Journal of Academic and Business Ethics*. 2009 Jul 1;2:1.
25. Devi S, Mohan S. a study on stress and its effects on College students. *International Journal of Scientific Engineering and Applied Science (IJSEAS)-Volume-1, Issue-7*. 2015 Oct.
26. El Ansari W, Stock C, Mills C. Is alcohol consumption associated with poor academic achievement in university students?. *International journal of preventive medicine*. 2013 Oct;4(10):1175.
27. Gilbert J. The Effects of Drinking on University Grades: Does Academic Motivation Play a Role?.
28. Sudraba V, Millere A, Deklava L, Millere E, Zumente Z, Circenis K, Millere I. Stress coping strategies of Drug and Alcohol Addicted patients in Latvia. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 2015 Oct 9;205:632-6.
29. Jayanthi P, Thirunavukarasu M, Rajkumar R. Academic stress and depression among adolescents: A cross-sectional study. *Indian pediatrics*. 2015 Mar 1;52(3):217-9.
30. Skipworth K. *Relationship between perceived stress and depression in college students* (Doctoral dissertation, Arizona State University).
31. Hassanbeigi A, Askari J, Hassanbeigi D, Pourmovahed Z. The relationship between stress and addiction. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 2013 Jul 9;84:1333-40.
32. Melaku L, Mossie A, Negash A. Stress among medical students and its association with substance use and academic performance. *Journal of Biomedical Education*. 2015;2015.
33. Uchendu UI, Ukonu OI. Effect of Substance Use on Academic Performance among Undergraduate Students in the University of Abuja, Nigeria. *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science*. 2016;4(3):62-71.
34. Hoerster V. *Smoking Behavior Among College Students: A Survey* (Doctoral dissertation).2012.