



Original Article

## Stress/Stressors as perceived by Nepalese Nursing Students

### Abstract:

**Introduction:** Nursing education is inherently stressful and demanding. Overwhelming burden of information leaves a minimal opportunity to relax and recreate and sometimes leads to serious sleep deprivation.

**Objectives:** It was intended to assess Stress, stressors and coping mechanisms in nursing Students studying at MCOMS (Nursing Programme), Pokhara, Nepal.

**Methods and Materials:** A descriptive survey study was carried out among 169 nursing students of 3 batches of PCL Nursing and 2 batches of B.Sc Nursing at MCOMS (Nursing Programme), Pokhara, Nepal. Data was collected on March and April 2012. A modified Perceived stress scale, Perceived stressor Scale and Coping Scale were used to collect data. Chi-square for association, Pearson rho and spearman rho for relationship was used for data analysis.

**Results:** The study revealed that majority (60.4 %) of the Students experienced moderate stress level. Majority (77.5%) of the Students experienced moderate stressor and only 1.2% of the student's experiences High stressor. Majority (84.6%) of the Students were having moderate coping and 6.5% having low coping. Study found that stress have significant positive relationship with stressors ( $p=.021$ ) and but no significant relationship with coping ( $p=.403$ ).

**Conclusion:** Majority of the Students experienced moderate stress level and majority of the Students were having moderate coping.

**Key Words:** Stress, Stressors, Coping mechanism, Perceived stress scale, nursing students

Sandhya Shrestha <sup>1</sup>,

Ranjana Lama<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lecturer, Manipal College of Medical Sciences (Nursing Program), Pokhara, Nepal

<sup>2</sup> Instructor, Tansen Nursing School, Palpa, Nepal

**Corresponding Author:**  
Sandhya Shrestha

Email: [shrestha\\_sandhu@yahoo.com](mailto:shrestha_sandhu@yahoo.com)

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### Introduction

Stress has been identified as a 20th century disease and has been viewed as a complex and dynamic transaction between individuals and their environments<sup>1</sup>. Stressors can be broadly defined as situations or events that have the potential to affect health outcomes<sup>2</sup>. Stress can be regarded as a psychological threat, in which the individual perceives a situation as a potential threat.<sup>3</sup>

Nursing is a profession which came into existence during the Crimean war and is continuing till date. Nursing students constitute the backbone of the nursing profession.<sup>4</sup> Entering the world of nursing presents the new students with a formidable array of changes. Often still in their teens they are often asked to transform from adolescent to adult and from lay person to professional.<sup>5</sup>

College students experience high stress at predictable times each semester due to academic commitments, financial pressures, and lack of time management skills. Moreover, regardless of year in school, college students often deal with pressures related to finding a job or a potential life partner. These stressors do not cause anxiety or tension by themselves. Instead, stress results from the interaction between stressors and the individual's perception and reaction to those stressors. Other potential sources of stress for college students include excessive homework, unclear assignments, and uncomfortable classrooms. In addition to academic requirements, relations with faculty members and time pressures may also be sources of stress.<sup>6</sup>

The term coping is used to refer to the process by which a person attempts to manage stressful demands. Coping

strategies are defined as the person's constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the person's resources.<sup>7</sup>

A study on "Stress/ Stressors as Perceived by Baccalaureate Saudi Nursing Students" indicated that as for the stressors among college students in terms of recent life experiences, (57.0%) of the students reported a lot of responsibilities as the most common stressor they are experiencing and considering as very much part of their life, other stressors were also reported as very much part of students' life such as; lower grades than hoped for (43.0%), not enough sleep (43.0%), too many things required at the same time (42.0%). There was a significant correlation between the Perceived Stress Scale and Students Recent Life Experiences ( $p < 0.01$ ; Spearman's rank correlation test = 0.47).<sup>8</sup>

The present study was done with the objectives to assess the stress, stressors and coping mechanisms in nursing Students, to find association between stressors and selected demographic variables, to find association between coping and selected demographic variables and to find relationship between Stressors and coping.

### Hypothesis

H<sub>1</sub> – There will be significant association between Stressor and selected variables such as age, religion, ethnicity, education, occupation, type of family, family income, number of children, duration of marriage and duration after husband's death.

H<sub>2</sub> – There will be significant association between Coping and selected variables such as age, religion, ethnicity, education, occupation, type of family, family income, number of children, duration of marriage and duration after husband's death.

H<sub>3</sub> – There will be significant relationship among stress and stressors, coping

H<sub>4</sub> – There will be significant relationship among stressors and coping.

### Methodology

The study was descriptive survey design. The present study was aimed to assess the stress, stressor and coping mechanism among 169 nursing students in Manipal College of Medical Sciences (Nursing Programme). Population for study were 1<sup>st</sup> year & 2<sup>nd</sup> year B. Sc. Nursing students & 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> year PCL Nursing students. Data was collected on March and April 2012. Instruments used were Demographic Profile, Perceived stress

scale, perceived stressor scale and the coping scale. It was ensured that data was not collected one week before and after, or during the examination or assignment in order to eliminate the effect of acute stressors.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were done to compute the results. The descriptive data included frequencies and means of perceived stressor scale. Chi-square was used for association and Pearson and Spearman Rho of correlation was used.

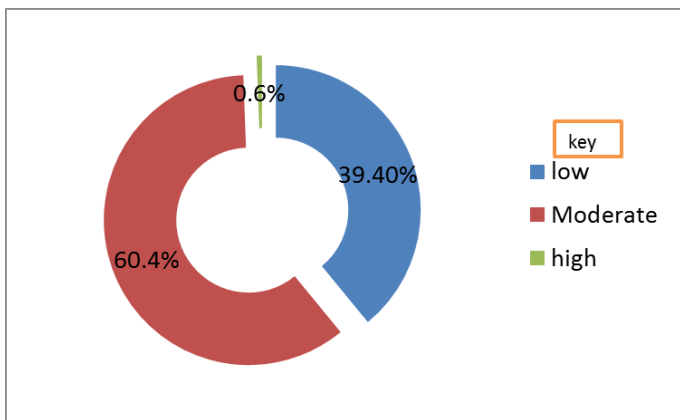
### Result

**Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of samples characteristics (n=169)**

Sl. No	Demographic variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1	<b>Age in years</b>		
	17-21	166	98.2
	22-25	3	1.8
2	<b>Religion</b>		
	Hindu	135	79.9
	Buddhism	31	18.3
	Christian	3	1.8
3	<b>Marital Status</b>		
	Single	167	98.2
	Married	2	1.2
4	<b>Family Type</b>		
	Nuclear	146	86.4
	Joint	23	13.6
5	<b>Economical support</b>		
	Parents	168	99.4
	Others	1	0.6
6	<b>Place of living</b>		
	Hostel	169	100
7	<b>Educational status</b>		
	PCL Nursing	119	70.4
	B.Sc. Nursing	50	29.6
8	<b>year of the study</b>		
	First year	70	42.0
	Second year	60	33.1
	Third year	39	24.9

Data represented in table 1 show that out of 169 samples Majority 98.2% were age group 17-21, Majority 79.9% were Hindu, Majority 98.2% were single, Majority 86.4% were Nuclear family, Majority 99.4% got economical support from Parents, All 100% were staying in Hostel, Most 70.4% were PCL nursing and Majority 42% were in first year.

Fig: 1 Pie diagram showing the stress of nursing students



Data represented in fig 1 shows that out of 169 samples Majority 60.4 % of the Students experienced moderate stress level and least 0.6% of the students experiences High stress level.

Table 2: Range, Minimum Score, Maximum Score, Mean, Median & Standard deviation of Perceived Stress (n=169)

	Range	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Mean	Median	SD
Stress	67.0	44.0	111.0	73.9	73.0	1.28

Data in Table 2 show Minimum score of Perceived stress was 44 and Maximum score of perceived stress was 111.

Table3: Stressors perceived by nursing students

n = 169

Stressors factor	Never (%)	Rarely (%)	Sometime (%)	Often (%)	Always (%)
<b>CURRICULUM</b>					
Planned in advance and informed about the curriculum plans	13.6	25.4	40.2	14.8	5.9
Too many theory subjects	5.3	13.0	43.2	30.8	7.7
Too many(practical hours)	7.7	10.7	26.6	34.3	20.7
Difficulty to correlate theory and practice.	4.1	22.5	48.5	18.9	5.9
Assignment, Projects, presentation and deadline of submission.	4.1	11.8	30.2	30.2	22.5
Inadequate knowledge about computers	0.6	11.2	35.5	36.1	1.8
Feeling that performance does not meet teacher's expectation.	1.8	12.4	44.4	32.0	9.5
Shortage of attendance	29.0	23.1	27.2	8.3	12.4
Worry about poor grades/results	5.9	10.7	31.4	29.0	23.1
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE</b>					
Adequate classroom facilities	32.6	28.4	14.8	11.8	12.4
Adequate availability of AV aids	18.9	27.8	29.0	16.0	8.3
Adequate availability of books/journals	22.5	26.0	21.3	17.8	12.4
Adequate availability transportation facilities	29.6	21.3	18.9	18.3	11.8
Adequate availability computer/internet facilities	21.3	23.7	28.4	14.8	11.8
Adequate hostel facilities	26.0	23.1	18.3	20.7	11.8
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>					
Interaction with faculty members	17.2	18.3	38.5	17.8	8.3
Interaction with peer group	27.2	17.2	15.4	14.8	25.4
Interaction with seniors	20.1	21.3	29.0	16.0	13.6
Interaction with juniors	38.5	24.9	18.8	0.1	7.7
Interaction with family members	42.0	10.1	13.6	8.9	25.4
Interaction with other professionals.	14.8	21.9	46.7	14.2	2.4
Interaction with patients and their family members.	15.4	26.6	22.6	20.1	15.4

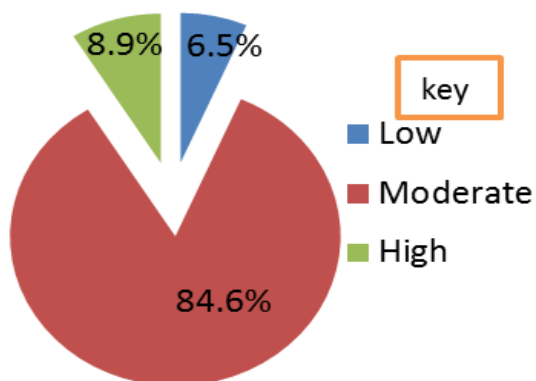
Data represented in table 3 shows that Majority 48.5% revealed that sometimes it was difficult to correlate theory and practice under the stressors factors curriculum and least 0.6 % never perceived Inadequate knowledge about computers. Majority 32.6% never perceived stressors factor for adequate classroom facilities and least 8.3 % always perceived Stressors for adequate availability of A.V Aids. Majority 46.7% revealed sometimes there is perceived stressors when interaction with other professionals under stressors communication and least 0.1% often perceived stressors Interaction with juniors.

Table 4: Frequency and percentage distribution of Perceived stressor level (n=169)

Sl. No	Perceived Stressor level	(f)	(%)
1	Low stress level (30-70)	36	21.3%
2	Moderate stress level (71-110)	131	77.5%
3	High stress level (111-150)	2	1.2%

Data represented in table 4 shows that out of 169 samples Majority 77.5 % of the Students experienced moderate stress level and least 1.2% of the students experiences High stress level.

Fig2: percentage distribution of coping strategies



Data represented in fig2 show that majority 84.6% of the Students were having moderate coping, 8.9% having High coping and 6.5% having low coping.

Table 5: Association between the Stressor and selected variables. (n=169)

variables	Stress			x <sup>2</sup>	df	P value	Level of significance
	Low	Moderate	High				
<b>Age in years</b>							
17-21	36	128	2	.886	2	.642	NS
22-25	0	3	0				
<b>Religion</b>				4.71	4	.318	NS
Hindu	29	104	2				
Buddhism	5	26	0				
Christian	2	1	0				
<b>Marital Status</b>				1.00	2	.605	NS
Single	35	130	2				
Married	1	1	0				
<b>Family Type</b>				2.95	2	.228	NS
Nuclear	34	110	2				
Joint	2	21	0				
<b>Economical support</b>				.292	2	.864	NS
Parents	36	130	2				
Others	0	1	0				
<b>Educational status</b>				12.9	2	.003	S
PCL	32	87	0				
Nursing B.Sc. Nursing	4	44	2				
<b>year of the study</b>				5.68	4	.224	NS
First year	11	59	1				
Second year	11	44	1				
Third year	14	28	0				

\*Significant at p< 0.05

Data represented in table 5 there was no association between Stressors and selected Variables like age, religion, marital status, Family type, economical support, year of the study Hence the researcher accepts the null hypothesis with regard to these variables and rejects the research hypothesis. There was association between Stressors and educational status, hence the researcher rejects the null hypothesis and accept the research hypotheses with regard to this variable.

Table 6: Association between the Coping and selected variables. (n=169)

variables	Stress			X <sup>2</sup>	df	P value	Level of significance
	Low	Moderate	High				
<b>Age in years</b>				.555	2	.758	NS
17-21	11	140	15				
22-25	0	3	0				
<b>Religion</b>				1.68	4	.794	NS
Hindu	10	112	13				
Buddhism	1	28	2				
Christian	0	3	0				
<b>Marital Status</b>				4.27	2	.118	NS
Single	11	142	14				
Married	0	1	1				
<b>Family Type</b>				5.51	2	.063	NS
Nuclear	10	126	10				
Joint	1	17	5				
<b>Economic support</b>				.183	2	.913	NS
Parents	11	142	15				
Others	0	1	0				
<b>Educational status</b>				5.49	2	.064	NS
PCL	11	99	9				
Nursing B.Sc. Nursing	0	44	6				
<b>year of the study</b>				2.90	4	.574	NS
First year	6	59	6				
Second year	2	47	7				
Third year	3	37	2				

\*Significant at p< 0.05

Data represented in table 6 show that there was no association between Coping and selected Variables like age, religion, marital status, Family type, economical support, educational status, year of the study hence the researcher accepts the null hypothesis with regard to these variables and rejects the research hypothesis.

**Table 7: Relationship among Stress, Stressors and Coping**  
n=169

Variables	Test of Significance	r value	P Value
Stressors	Pearson rho	.178	.021*
Coping	Pearson rho	.065	.403
<b>Stressors</b>			
Coping	Spearman rho	.235	.002*

\*Significant at  $p < 0.05$

Data presented in table 7 show stress have significant positive relationship with stressors ( $p=.021$ ) and there was no significant relationship with coping ( $p=.403$ ) hence null hypothesis was rejected and research hypothesis was accepted with this variable Stressors but null hypothesis was accepted and research hypothesis was rejected with the variable coping. Stressors have significant positive relationship with coping ( $P=.002$ ) hence null hypothesis was rejected and research hypothesis was accepted.

## Discussion

A study was conducted by Rajesh Kumar and Nancy to assess Level of stress and coping Strategies among nursing Students .Data was obtained from 180 nursing students using Perceived Stress scale .Results shows Majority 62(34.4%) had Moderate stress .This study Supports present study as Majority 60.4 % of the Students experienced moderate stress level.<sup>9</sup>

A Cross sectional study was conducted by Mostafa A to assess Stress among a Mansoura (Egypt) baccalaureate nursing student. Data was obtained from 373 Students using self-administered questionnaire. Tool was Socio- demographics, list of possible stressors, perceived stress, physical wellbeing factors, anxiety and depressive symptoms. Results show Prevalence of 40.2% high stress level. This study Contraindicates present study as Majority 60.4 % of the Students experienced moderate stress level.<sup>10</sup>

## Conclusion

The present study concludes that Majority of the Students experienced moderate stress level. Majority of the Students were having moderate coping. There was association between Stressors and educational status but there was no association between Stressors and other variables. Stress has significant positive relationship with stressors and there was no significant relationship with coping.

## Recommendations

Researchers recommend that a similar study can be done in different settings. Also comparative study can be done among Private colleges and Government colleges.

## Acknowledgment

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## Ethical Clearance

Present study proposal was approved by research committee, MTH, pokhara, Nepal. Written Consent was taken from each Participant.

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