Influence of Personal Factors on the Perceived Stress Level of Students of College of Nursing, Jaffna

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Abstract: Stress is a response to a situation where the person faces difficult to cope with. Nursing students are likely to undergo considerable amounts of stress during the study period. Aim of this study is to assess the perceived stress level of final year nursing students at the school of nursing, Jaffna and to evaluate the influence of personal factors on it. A cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted among all the final year nursing students by a self administered questionnaire after obtaining their consent. This questionnaire had four sections to collect demographic data, perceived stress level, skills used in stress management and to identify coping styles following a stressful event etc. Perceived stress level is measured by the perceived stress scale (developed by American Sociological Association and the suggested normal mean value is 14.2 (SD±6.2). Chi-squared test was used to find out the significant relationship. 172 responses were obtained and 33% of them were from males and only 26% studied biology at G.C.E. (A/L). Answers to perceived stress level were marked out of 40, the mean was 19.55 (SD±6.6), gender ($p=0.750$), age ($p=0.203$) and the A/L stream ($p=0.505$), did not showed statistically significant differences in perceived stress level. Regarding stress management skills, time management ($p=0.0$), interest on nursing ($p=0.00$), problem solving techniques ($p=0.009$), setting achievable goal ($p=0.019$), ability to say "no" ($p=0.02$) and escape or avoidance ($p=0.002$) show significant differences but self rewarding ($p=0.326$) did not. With regard to coping styles after exposure to stressful conditions, relaxation ($p=0.009$), leisure activities ($p=0.012$) and relationship support ($p=0.042$) had influence but positive reappraisal ($p=0.063$) and ability to express feelings ($p=0.057$) did not show significant reduction. The stress level of nursing students has a big range due to individual variation of personal stress management skills. From the results it could be observed that the students who practised stress management skills appear to have less perceived stress levels. With the best stress management skills students can reduce the stress level and improve their performance. Further studies would be useful to explore the causes of the elevated stress levels of the nursing students.

Keywords: Nursing Students, Perceived Stress Level, Personal Stress Management Skills