



Assessment of Stress in Hospitalized Patients and the Factors Influencing IT

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ABSTRACT

Objectives

To assess the level of stress among the hospitalized patients

To evaluate the factors precipitating it

Methods

A descriptive type of study was done in the hospitalized patients by a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised of two parts. First part included Perceived Stress Score 10 item scale and the second part consisted of factors influencing the causation of stress. A total of 60 participants from Fauji Foundation Hospital and Lahore General Hospital were interviewed individually and their response was recorded. The data was collected and the results were obtained.

Results

A sample of sixty participants formed the sample size and had an average age of 47 years. Approximately 52% of the patients were in moderate stress and 42% had low stress level. Almost 6.7% were reported to be in severe stress. Scrutinizing the individual factors involved in exposition of stress, 73% had financial issues leading to stress. 70% regarded rude behavior of staff and severity of disease as a source of tension. Fear of operation caused 63% and fear of injections spark offed 53% of the population distress due to these factors. 52% reported homesickness, 43% regarded being bedridden whole day, 40% considered no privacy and 32% attributed discomfort of unknown place as the sources of stress in them. Poor doctor-patient communication was proclaimed by one third of patients as the cause of genesis of strain.

Conclusion

The stress level among hospitalized patients is hiking up and its deteriorating the prognosis of patients. Tangible steps need to be taken by health care professionals to minimize the inflammation of stress and to reduce its detrimental effects on human health. This can be implemented by exploring the factors inciting it and finding a solution for each of them individually.

Keywords

Stress, hospitalization, patients

INTRODUCTION

Stress is a natural response of a body to any demands impressed upon it. Hospital is a place where every individual avoids its very existence. The hospitalization always stir a turmoil of apprehension and nervousness in the patients. They have to leave their comfort zones to stay in the hospital where their emotional and physical strengths are challenged. They have to adapt themselves to the totally strange environment and

absorb all the difficulties faced during their stay. This induces a great degree of stress in patients and initiates a body response to this pressure on body. Many patients end up developing hypertension and hyperglycemia in response to this challenge on body. Besides their recovery and healing power is greatly impaired due to continuous sympathetic state of the whole body. Cardiovascular complications have been reported in patients as a result of severe stress in hospital.

Hence stress in hospitalized patients is a very important factor to be dealt promptly and wisely. This is an issue which needs considerable attention for better outcomes. It is necessary that the radical steps should be taken to minimize stress while hospitalization.

This study has been done to highlight and emphasize the prevalence of the stress among the hospitalized patients and to delineate its precipitating factors. The common pressing factors have been inquired about by the patients. The patient's response has aptly depicted the degree to which each factor is contributing. This will surely provide us the grounds for improvement and help tackle these issues for better results. We will be able to ensure the delivery of quality care by addressing the problems leading to stress in patients.

METHODS

A total number of 60 participants were interviewed from two hospitals. Sample was taken from Medical, Surgical and Gynecological wards of Fauji Foundation Hospital Rawalpindi and Lahore General Hospital Lahore. A self-administered questionnaire was made and the response of the participants was recorded. The formulated questionnaire comprised of two parts. First part included Perceived Stress Score 10 item scale which had standardized set of questions to perceive the degree of stress among the hospitalized patients. The second part consisted of 10 important factors which were scrutinized in all patients to see their role in the causation of stress. The data was collected by meticulous interviewing and was compiled thereafter. The final results were evaluated based on the guidelines of standard Perceived Stress Scoring. The percentages of all the factors showing their contribution in igniting tension and stress were made out. The results were figured out finally and interpretations were documented.



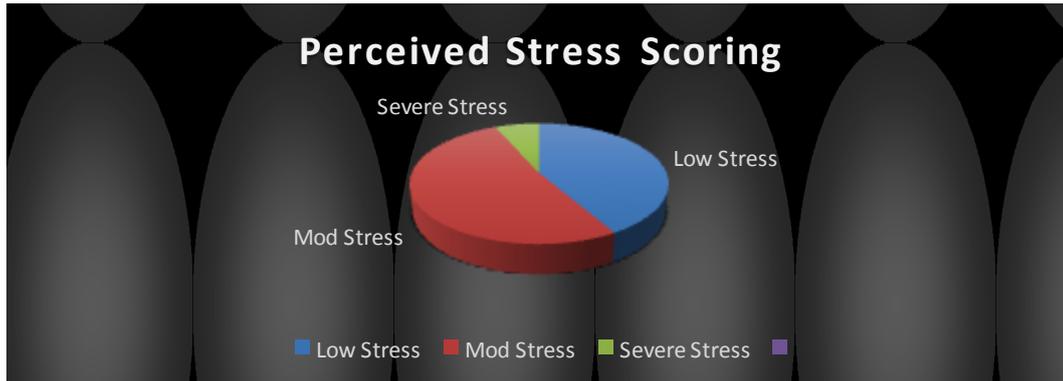
RESULTS

A sample of 60 hospitalized patients with the average age of 47 years comprised the study population. Most of them were mainly married and came from a low socioeconomic background with low literacy level.

The first part of the questionnaire revealed the amount of stress the patients were facing in the hospital. Since it was a standardized scale for assessment of stress so results marked a clear distinction between low, moderate and severe level

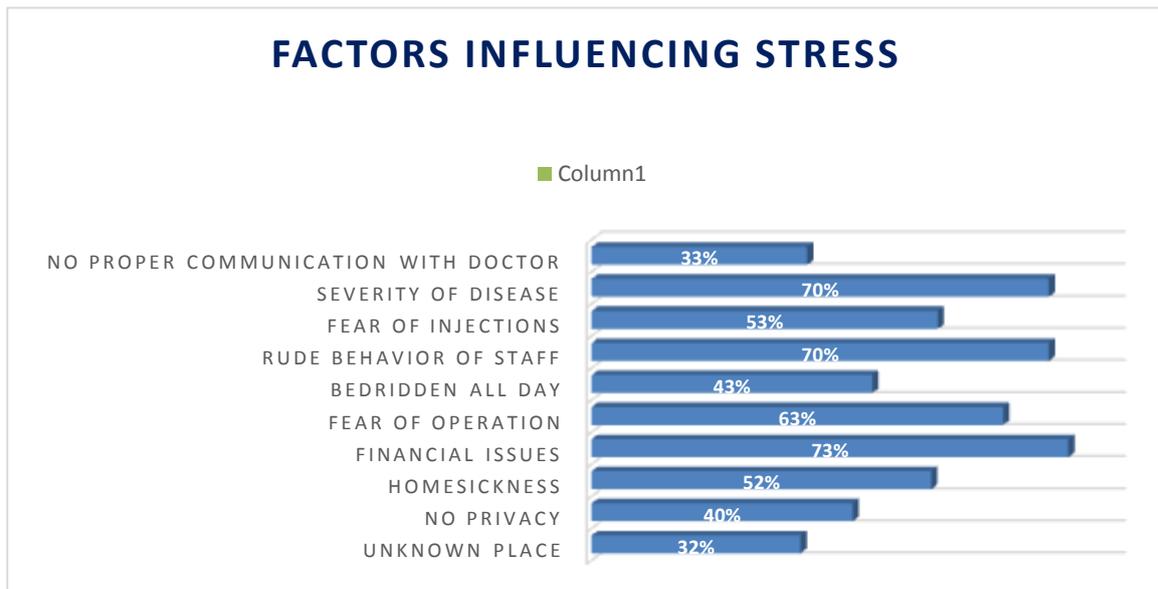
of stress. The total score was graded into these three categories as implies by the scoring system. The scores of 0-13 were regarded as low stress while 14 to 26 as moderate and 27-40 as severe degree of stress.

The results delineated that 51.6 percent of the total study population were in moderate stress. 41.6 percent of them were in the range of low stress and only 6.6 percent of the patients were in severe stress. This depicted the presence of stress among the hospitalized patients in a greater proportion



PSS RESULT

The second part of the questionnaire extrapolated the individual role of factors in causing stress in patients. The greatest proportion of the study population, that is 73 percent individuals, blamed financial issues to be a basic source of stress for them. 70% of them regarded the stress of severity of disease’ and ‘the rude behavior of staff’ as the source of tension. Fear of being operated caused stress in 63% of the patients and 53% of them had fear of injection which kept them under tension. Staying away from home also incited stress in 52% and being bedridden made 43% of patients irritated. 40 percent of participants had privacy issues and 32% had discomfort in an unknown place i.e. hospital. One third of the population reported that doctors had no proper communication with them which made them worried.





The results were compiled as the data was documented by the individual interviewing of the patients of the aforesaid hospitals.

DISCUSSION

Emotional, mental and physical strain on the body instill a great degree of unrest in patients while being hospitalized. This leads to a mental state which is quite unstable and abnormal. Human body is a well regulated intricate creation. Every impact on it influences its mechanical and electrical functioning. It causes the disruption of the complex balance that it develops for a stable survival. This leads to worsening of the existent disease and incurs further more ailments leading to poor prognosis.

This progression to vicious conclusion can be controlled if the level of stress in hospitalized patients is minimized. This study shows how stressed the patients are in their hospital stay. Though most of them were in the category of moderate stress, i.e. almost 52% of them, but this spotlighted the presence and degree of stress in them. A small percentage of the study population expressed their great worry while residing in hospital, which was upto 7 percent approximately. This underlined that hospital-stay does affect the human body and produces a great amount of vexation apart from the disease itself.

Patients have been quite agitated and irritated nowadays. All efforts should be made to keep them at ease. The approach of the hospital administration should be such that the level of stress should be grossly curtailed. All the factors leading to the discomfort of the patients should be dealt individually and diligently.

There are quite a myriad of factors influencing the stress in hospitalized patients. All of them have their specific degree of impaction on the patient to induce stress. We shortlisted ten important factors which were notorious of inciting stress in patients. The results manifest that the three most pressing factors were the financial issues, the rude behavior of the staff and the severity of disease. People in government hospitals are mostly from the low socioeconomic background. The disease is a huge trial for them. Let alone the disease, the tribulations they have to face to get the treatment and afford all the expenses take their heart out. Those who were hand to mouth have to cut down their throats to ensure their survival now which is a dilemma. Though the government hospital provides great facilitation by waiving off their expenses but the prolonged hospital stay pressurizes them as they come from far-flung areas.

The fear of not being cured is also depressing. The doctors should provide adequate

counselling to the patients in this regard. Poor doctor-patient communication has a great barrier to better approach. Doctor should build a proper rapport with the patient. Explain everything to the patients and clear his concerns. The rude behavior of the staff is a great source of stress. A patient should be dealt with affection and tenderness. When you know he is already in agony, how can you be so callous to extend his sufferings.

Fear of operation and injections also had more than 50% of their contribution in triggering stress. Adequate counselling and support can diminish the impact of this stress on patients.

Hospital is a place of no privacy and no acquaintance. So a person while being bed ridden whole day in a confined area becomes nostalgic and gets vulnerable to anxiety. These factors have a proportion of almost one third of the total population in kindling stress among hospitalized patients. It's on the hospital administration to ensure a very conducive and comfortable environment for the patients to decrease the worrisome cycle of distress.

Similar study was done in central India by Neeraj Charri and it documented 73% patients to be in stress. But in contrast to this we divided the patients according to severity as mild, moderate and severe. 58% of the patients fell in the category of moderate and severe. Besides the greater contributory factor in their study was the fear of operation and it's implications. Contrarily our study highlighted the stress due to financial constraints as a major source of distress. Considering the developing status of our country i.e. Pakistan this is quite evidently justifiable.(18)

CONCLUSION

Hospital is an arena of stress, agony and discomfort. As the patients enters in its suburbs, though he is hopeful for the cure, he still feels nervous and distressed by its environment. A joint effort should be made to create a very favorable and a promising aura of comfort for the patients in hospital. Starting from the architecture and maintenance to the hospital staff's conduct, all the grounds of rectification should be taken up. Psychological preparation of the patients should be done before any intervention either medical or surgical. Counselling is the center of provision of standard health care to patients. If a patient is perturbed in a place where he is trying to restore his health, it is quite abashing for the hospital staff! Let the heaven be heaven, let it be the well of the elixir of life!

DISCLAIMER NONE.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST NONE.



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