Assess The Level Of Stress And Anxiety During Clinical Posting Among First Year Nursing Students

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ABSTRACT

Nursing curriculum demands theory hours plus clinical hours. The clinical field environment is new for the first-year nursing students to deal with real-world patient care. This study attempt to assess the level of stress and anxiety during clinical posting among first year nursing students. Research has shown that first-year nursing students frequently experience elevated levels of stress and anxiety during their initial clinical postings. The main objective of this study was to assess the level of stress and anxiety during clinical posting among first year nursing students. A quantitative study was conducted with descriptive Research Design. For this study convenient sampling technique was used to draw the sample for the study. Data collected from 101 first year nursing students of A.N.M., G.N.M. and B. Sc. The findings of the study revealed that the level of stress among first year nursing students during clinical rotation. Total 101 samples collected. Among that 17[16.83%]students doesn't have any stress, 55 [54.46%] students were having mild level of stress, 28[27.72%] students were having moderate level of stress and 1[0.99%] student have severe level of stress during clinical rotation and level of anxiety among 101 samples from 22[21.78%] students doesn't have any anxiety , 52[51.49%] students were having mild level of anxiety, 24[23.76%] students were having moderate level of anxiety and 3[2.97%] students were having severe level of anxiety during clinical rotation. Therefore it is concluded that maximum students were having mild level of stress and anxiety during clinical posting among first year nursing students

1. INTRODUCTION

Nursing education is a demanding academic and clinical journey that requires students to acquire both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Clinical postings, which are an integral part of nursing training, expose students to real-life healthcare settings, where they must apply their skills under the supervision of clinical instructors and registered nurses. However, this transition from classroom learning to hands-on patient care can be a significant source of stress and anxiety[1].

Stress among nursing students during clinical posting can stem from various factors, including fear of making mistakes, heavy workloads, lack of confidence, and unfamiliarity with hospital environments [2]. Additionally, the emotional burden of dealing with critically ill patients, time constraints, and challenging interactions with healthcare professionals further exacerbate anxiety levels [3]. Persistent stress and anxiety not only impact students' academic performance but also affect their overall well-being, leading to burnout, reduced self-efficacy, and even attrition from nursing programs [4].

Understanding the prevalence and causes of stress and anxiety among nursing students during clinical postings is crucial for developing effective interventions that enhance their coping mechanisms and resilience. By identifying stressors and implementing supportive strategies, nursing educators and healthcare institutions can create a more conducive learning environment, ultimately improving students' clinical competence and mental health.

Background of the Study:

First-year nursing students who are often inexperienced and emotionally unprepared to deal with real-world patient care. The clinical setting exposes students to various stressors such as fear of making mistakes, dealing with death and suffering, time pressures, and interpersonal conflicts with staff or patients.

Research has shown that first-year nursing students frequently experience elevated levels of stress and anxiety during their initial clinical postings. This psychological distress can negatively impact their learning, performance, self-confidence, and overall well-being. Moreover, persistent stress and anxiety, if unaddressed, may contribute to burnout, reduced academic achievement, and even decisions to leave the nursing profession altogether.

Understanding the prevalence and sources of stress and anxiety during clinical training is essential for educators and administrators to design effective support systems, including stress management programs, peer support, and mentorship opportunities. This study aims to investigate the prevalence and contributing factors of stress and anxiety among first-year nursing students during their clinical postings.

2. NEED FOR STUDY

Clinical posting is a crucial component of nursing education, providing students with practical exposure and the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge. However, this transition from classroom to clinical setting often exposes students to high levels of stress and anxiety due to factors such as lack of experience, fear of making mistakes, dealing with critically ill patients, and interpersonal relationships with staff and mentors. Persistent stress and anxiety during this phase may adversely affect students' academic performance, learning outcomes, and psychological well-being.

Several studies have reported that nursing students experience moderate to high levels of stress during clinical training. Stressors include workload, patient care responsibilities, and perceived lack of competence[5]. Anxiety in this context can also lead to reduced clinical performance and poor patient interaction, ultimately compromising the quality of care[6]. Understanding the prevalence and sources of stress and anxiety is essential to develop targeted interventions such as counselling, peer support, and curriculum modifications to enhance students' coping abilities and learning experiences.

As mental health among healthcare students becomes a growing concern worldwide, it is essential to assess and address psychological challenges in early stages. Hence, this study is necessary to evaluate the prevalence of stress and anxiety during clinical postings among nursing students, and to inform institutional strategies for support and intervention[7].

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Assess the level of stress and anxiety during clinical posting among first year nursing students.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.To assess the level of stress and anxiety during clinical posting among first year nursing students.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS:

1) **Assess:** Assess refers to the process of systematically measuring the level of stress and anxiety experienced by first-year nursing students during clinical posting using Likert Scale.

2) **Stress**: A psychological or physiological response to clinical posting challenges, such as workload, patient care responsibilities, and interactions with healthcare professionals.

3) **Anxiety**: A feeling of unease, worry, or nervousness related to clinical exposure.

4) **Clinical Posting**: A mandatory practical training period where nursing students are placed in healthcare settings (e.g., hospitals, clinics) to gain hands-on experience in patient care under the supervision of clinical instructors.

5) **Nursing Students**: Individuals enrolled in a nursing education program who are undergoing clinical training as part of their curriculum.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A study was conducted to assess the Prevalence of Stress and Anxiety Among Nursing Students. Stress and anxiety are commonly reported among nursing students, especially during clinical training. In total, 121 students were included in the meta-analysis. Most nursing students experienced moderate stress (42.1%) and mild to moderate anxiety (19.4%-25.1%). Third- and fourth-year nursing students had severe stress levels compared with those in the first and second years (29.0% vs 15.1%). A random-effects model and a moderator analysis were used to examine the overall prevalence and related factors. Begg's test was adopted to examine publication bias. Conclusion of this study was nurse educators should design appropriate curricula to strengthen student's knowledge and provide regular assessments and supportive interventions to reduce stress and anxiety[8].

A Descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted on Undergraduate nursing students The problem statement was Undergraduate nursing students' stress sources and coping behaviours during their initial period of clinical training.The sample size was 150.Structured questionnaire (Perceived Stress Scale) was used and result was given on the basis of that, Summary & Results for this study was Lack of professional knowledge was 88%, Fear of making mistakes with patients was 84 %, Inability to answer questions from clinical staff was 76 %, Being evaluated by instructors 70%, Handling new medical

equipment 66%, Difficult interactions with clinical instructors 62%, Lack of cooperation from hospital staff was 60%.Conclusion for this study was identification of major stressors and improving students' coping mechanisms can enhance their clinical learning and this will make the to improve the skills[9].

Song and Lindquist (2015) conducted a quasi-experimental study to evaluate the effects of a Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program on depression, anxiety, stress, and mindfulness among Korean nursing students. A total of 72 participants were divided equally into intervention (n=36) and control (n=36) groups. Tools such as the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale-21 (DASS-21) and the Korean version of the Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills (KIMS) were used for data collection. The intervention group participated in an eight-week MBSR (Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction) program, while the control group received no such intervention. Results revealed that students in the intervention group experienced statistically significant reductions in anxiety ($p < 0.001$), depression ($p < 0.01$), and stress ($p < 0.01$) levels after the program, in comparison to the control group. Additionally, mindfulness skills, particularly observing, acting with awareness, and non-judging, showed significant improvement ($p < 0.001$). The study concluded that integrating mindfulness practices into nursing education can effectively enhance emotional regulation and mental well-being, especially during stressful clinical periods[10].

A web-based cross-sectional study was conducted among 380 nursing students from Jazan Nursing College, using Google Forms containing a structured questionnaire, a generalized anxiety disorder scale (GAD-7), and a perceived stress scale (PSS-10) to assess the levels of anxiety and stress. Purpose of this study was to determine the prevalence of stress and anxiety among nursing students. Results of this study was the prevalence of anxiety symptoms scale shows minimal symptoms were the most frequent (85.3%), followed by mild (6.3%), severe (6.1%), and moderate (2.4%), and Stress symptoms scale shows mild 90.3%, followed by moderate 5.5% and severe 4.2%. Conclusions: The study found that most nursing students experienced minimal anxiety (85.3%) and mild stress (90.3%). In light of these findings, the researchers suggested formal and informal curricula for improving coping behaviors and self-management of stress and anxiety[11].

METHODOLOGY:

▶ Research Approach: Quantitative

▶ Research Design: Descriptive Research Design

▶ Sample: First Year Nursing students of A.N.M.,G.N.M. and B.Sc.

▶ Sample size: 101

▶ Sampling Technique: convenient sampling technique

Inclusive Criteria:

➢ First year nursing students who all are attending clinical posting

➢ Those who are willing to participate in the study

➢ Those who are able to read and write English language

Exclusive criteria:

➢ Those who are having severe illness during the time of data collection

Research variables:

a. **Research Variables:** Level of stress and anxiety during the clinical rotation among first year nursing students

b. **Demographic variables**: Age in years, Gender, Marital Status, Programme Name and Prior clinical experience before nursing college?

Demographic Factors:

Table 1: Demographic Information

1	Age in years	Frequency	Percentage
	19-21years	96	95.05
	22-24years	1	0.99
	Above 24 years	4	3.96
2	**Gender**		

		Male	7	6.93
		Female	94	93.07
		Other	0	0
3	**Marital Status**			
		Single	98	97.03
		Married	3	2.97
4	**Programme Name**			
		A.N.M.	30	29.70
		G.N.M.	34	33.66
		B.Sc.	37	36.63
5	Do you have any prior clinical experience before nursing college?			
		Yes	14	13.86
		No	87	86.14

Table 2: Stress Levels This table indicates how many participants experience each of the following stress-related situations during their clinical posting.

(Using a **Likert scale**: 0 = Never, 1 = Sometimes, 2 = Always)

SR.No	Content	Never [0]	Sometimes [1]	Always [2]
1	I feel that I may make mistake during the posting.	32	63	6
2	I struggle with adapting to different clinical environments or rotations.	32	58	11
3	I feel stressed when interacting with doctors and senior nurses.	33	63	5
4	I am stressed about maintaining professional behaviour constantly.	39	52	10
5	My stress levels negatively impact my academic performance during the posting.	40	55	6
6	I feel confident about applying theoretical knowledge to clinical practice.	22	53	26
7	Clinical instructors are supportive during clinical rotations. It helps to reduce the worry during the posting.	15	48	38
8	I am worried about the completion of clinical requirements.	13	48	40
9	I feel burdened by the academic workload along with clinical practice.	24	65	12
10	I feel stressed due to unclear clinical instructions.	24	66	11

Table 3 : Interpretation of Scores Distribution of stress level among samples

n = 101

Sr.No	Score Range		Frequency	Percentage
1	No Stress	(0 – 5)	17	16.83%
2	Mild stress	(6 – 10)	55	54.46%
3	Moderate stress	(11 – 15)	28	27.72%
4	Severe stress	(15 – 20)	1	0.99%

The above table shows level of stress among first year nursing students during clinical rotation. Among 101 samples 17 students doesn't have any stress, 55 students were have mild level of stress, 28 students were having moderate level of stress and 1 student have severe level of stress during clinical rotation.

Table 4 : Anxiety Levels This table indicates how many participants experience each of the following anxiety-related situations during their clinical posting.

(Using a **Likert scale**: 0 = Never, 1 = Sometimes, 2 = Always)

Sl.No	Content	Never [0]	Sometimes [1]	Always [2]
1	I feel anxious before starting my clinical shifts.	29	58	14
2	I feel Anxiety before going for night duty.	32	49	20
3	I feel so restless that it is hard to sit still during clinical posting period.	30	63	8
4	I get anxious about being asked questions by clinical instructors.	20	69	12
5	I feel anxious to do the clinical duties with senior nursing students.	40	49	12
6	I avoid certain procedures due to fear of failure.	43	48	10
7	I fear being judged by others in the clinical area.	29	62	10
8	I feel panic in emergency or high-pressure clinical situations.	22	61	18
9	I worry about not remembering the correct steps for procedures.	22	66	13
10	I feel anxious when dealing with real patients.	31	59	11

Table 5 : Interpretation of Scores Distribution of anxiety level among samples

n = 101

Sr.No	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage
1	No Anxiety (0 – 5)	22	21.78%
2	Mild Anxiety (6 – 10)	52	51.49%
3	Moderate Anxiety (11 – 15)	24	23.76%
4	Severe Anxiety (15 – 20)	3	2.97%

The above table shows level of anxiety among first year nursing students during clinical rotation. Among 101 samples 22 students doesn't have any anxiety, 52 students were having mild level of anxiety, 24 students were having moderate level of anxiety and 3 students were having severe level of anxiety during clinical rotation.

Table 6 : Showing mean, standard deviation, median, range, mode and standard error of stress and anxiety during clinical posting among first year nursing students.

Variables	Mean	SD	Median	Range	Mode	SE
Stress	8.92	3.53	9	0-16	10	0.35
Anxiety	8.31	3.90	9	0-16	10	0.39

The above table shows Mean, standard deviation, median, range, mode and standard error of stress and anxiety during clinical posting among first year nursing students. The mean score for stress is 8.92, standard deviation for stress is 3.53, median for stress is 9, the range of stress is between 0-16, mode for stress is 10 and standard error is 0.35. The mean score for anxiety is 8.31, standard deviation for anxiety is 3.90, median for anxiety is 9, the range of anxiety is between 0-16, mode for stress is 10 and standard error is 0.39.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that first-year nursing students experience mild to moderate level of stress and anxiety during clinical postings. These results are consistent with previous research highlighting the transition from theory to practice as a major stressor for novice nursing students (e.g., entering an unfamiliar clinical environment, interacting with patients, fear of making mistakes). Sources of stress identified included performance pressure, communication with staff and patients, workload, and time management challenges. Early orientation programs and pre-clinical simulations may help reduce anxiety by increasing familiarity and confidence. Mentorship systems or peer support groups could offer emotional support and practical guidance. Faculty and clinical instructors should be trained to provide constructive feedback in a supportive manner.

5. CONCLUSION

The assessment of stress and anxiety levels among first-year nursing students during clinical posting reveals that a significant proportion of students experience mild to moderate levels of stress and anxiety. In the clinical field the first year nursing students face problems like unfamiliar clinical environments, fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence in practical skills, and pressure from instructors and peers. The findings underscore the need for structured support systems, including orientation programs, peer mentoring, and psychological counselling, to help students manage stress effectively. Early intervention can enhance student's coping mechanisms, improve clinical learning outcomes, and contribute to their overall mental well-being and academic success.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Longitudinal Study can be conducted so that researcher can track stress and anxiety levels across all years of nursing education to understand how clinical experience influences psychological adaptation over time.

Interventional studies could evaluate the effectiveness of stress-reduction programs or coping strategies.

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