

Occupational Stress among Male and Female Mental Health Professionals

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Abstract:

Objectives: This study aimed to examine the Occupational stress level of male and female mental health professionals.

Methods: The sample employed in this study consists of 20 male and 20 female professionals of different age groups.

Results: Data analysis reveals that male mental health professionals are found under more stress than female professionals.

Conclusions: This study provided insight into the fact that mental health professionals need to manage their stress also, although female professionals were found less stressful in comparison of male professionals.

Keywords: (i) Mental Health Professionals (Male and Female) (ii) Occupational Stress

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I. INTRODUCTION

Stress is a subjective feeling of strain and pressure, in Psychology. Simandan,D (2010) states that Stress is a type of a psychological pain . We all react differently to stressful situations. What is stressful to one person may not be stressful to another. Almost anything can cause stress. Stress is the body's natural defense against predators and danger. It flushes the body with hormones to prepare systems to evade or confront danger. This is known as the "fight-or-flight" mechanism (Cannon,1932). When we are faced with a challenge, part of our response is physical. The body activates resources to protect us by preparing us either to stay and fight or to get away as fast as possible. The body produces larger quantities of the chemicals cortisol, adrenaline, and noradrenaline. These trigger an increased heart rate, heightened muscle preparedness, sweating, and alertness. All these factors improve the ability to respond to a hazardous or challenging situation. Stress is not always bad for us. Small amount may be desired, beneficial, and even healthy. Colligan and Higgins (2005) state that stress is divided into two categories: Eustress and Distress. Eustress is also known as positive or good stress which is responsible for motivation, adaptation and reaction to the environment, and distress – negative or bad may lead too bodily harm, stress can increases the risk of strokes, heart attacks, ulcers and mental illnesses such as depression (Sapolsky,2001).

Occupation is one of the most common factors of stress, which is related to one's job. Occupational stress often stems from unexpected responsibilities and pressures that do not align with a person's knowledge, skills, or expectations, inhibiting one's ability to cope. Occupational stress can increase when workers do not feel supported by supervisors or colleagues, or feel as if they have little control over work processes (WHO, 2015). Even mental health professionals who treat people with stress and anxiety for a living, can't even escape their stress. There are over a half-dozen different mental health professions that provide services that focus on helping a person overcome a mental health concern or some significant life issue.

In India A **mental health professional** is a health care practitioner or community services provider who offers services for the purpose of improving an individual's mental health or to treat mental disorders. In present, mental health professionals are working for each area of living as school to college level, small firm to corporate, training to research etc . Basically in India ,Mental health professional are working for hospitals, schools, private practice, rehabilitation centres and many Govt offices. While working for edification they meet face-to-face all aspects of human emotions – from clinical interview to rehabilitation followed by follow ups, experiencing a family's expressed emotions toward patient's and the emotions that surround someone's whole illness However, many of mental healthcare providers suffer at the job and need professional help. The nature of their work is full of occupational challenges that are why present study was executed.

The aim of the study is to examine the level of occupational stress among male and female mental health care professionals

H₀: There is no significant difference in the occupational stress level among mental health male and female professionals.

II. METHODOLOGY

Sample Plan:

This study was conducted on the 40 mental health professionals, which were divided in to two categories based on sex (20 male and 20 female). The mean of age was 38.5. The minimum qualification level was PG and all were in job with minimum three years of working experience in the relevant field. All samples were chosen from Rehabilitation centres of M.P. and Delhi though accidental sampling.

Tool:

Occupational Stress Index: This scale was developed by A.K. Shrivastava and A.P. Singh in 1981. In this scale, there are 15 items which are used for the assessment of Occupational Stress followed by three domains of occupational stress i.e. role overload, role ambiguity and role conflict.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Sample	N	Mean	SD	SEd	t-Value
Male	15	11.93	1.58	0.69	5.99*
Female	15	7.8	2.04		

df-28* significant at 0.01 level of confidence

The aim of the present study was to assess the occupational stress among male and female mental health professionals. The result indicates that there is significance difference in mean of both group and t-value is significant on confidence level of 0.01.

Thus our hypothesis “there is no significant difference in the occupational stress level among mental health male and female professionals” is rejected.

Hence on the bases of present study’s result this is clear that female mental health professionals having less stress in comparison of male mental health professionals. The results showed that stress level among male mental health professionals is high and can be easily named as a problem.

Avoiding stress is neither possible nor desirable, managing stress is critical and requires a multifaceted approach. Each person’s life and each person’s career carries with it its own unique stressors. As a mental health professional, the nature of job is to listen to patients and help provide them with tools to alleviate their anxiety, anger and/or depression. At the end of long day, mental health professionals find that they need to alleviate their own stress because of mental exercise with different –different patients (Pavllow,2004) . In psychiatry every patient is challenging because of their intellectual level and it becomes more complicated with expressed emotions of family (Lopez et al.,2004) most of the time therapist work out on the expressed emotions of the family as well as patient but its impact negatively on the quality of life of therapist. While working as mental health professional, there are many institutes run by unprofessional persons, which may lead to cause of burnout in Asia (Maslach & Leiter,1997). The result of present study indicates that female having less occupational stress in comparison of male as working mental health professionals may be difference in their perception of the level of control (Janssen,2000;Sanne et al.,2005; Brunborg,2008). The second explanation can be explained by Martin et. Al. (2007) that women perceive greater support at work place from people of the same or opposite sex. Another study suggest that female are more effective on monotonous work in comparison of male. In mental health set up there are n no of cases which reflect same symptoms and treatment guideline. Van et al. (1999) found that female are more tolerable and humble in comparison of male, those traits also requires in psychiatric practice. That’s why female mental health professionals having less stress in comparison of male.

IV. CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this paper was to examine the level of stress among male and female mental health professional. This topic has been chosen, because there are countable researches available till time. Conclusion can be draw on the bases of result that female mental health professionals were found more effective than male professionals as having low level of stress while working with psychiatric patients.

Limitations:

The size of the sample used in this paper is only 30 participants, which is a strong limitation for reliability and generalizing of the results. There was lack of control on participants, because participants were expert of psychological testing. So it is possible that they did manipulate their response.

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