

Impact of Stress on Family Functioning among Nursing Professionals During COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Covid-19 is a respiratory disease caused by the novel virus SARS-COV-2 which was declared as global pandemic by WHO in march 2020. This was the time when all the countries all over the world imposed different degrees of restriction to prevent spreading of infection. Many research studies have focused on the general population, and frontline workers affected by covid-19. They found increase in mental health problems, consistency of psychological stress, anxiety and depression. The present study was taken to study the impact of stress experienced by the nursing staff on parenting and family adjustment. Employing the purposive random sampling technique, the study was conducted in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. Sample size was 120 nurses which included 60 nurses each from both government and private hospitals respectively who were between 30-40 years of age. Stress among nurses was measured by using Stress scale developed by Sharma and Sharma (2019) and Parenting and family Adjustment scale developed by Sanders *et al.*, (2014) was used to assess the family functioning. The results revealed The parent and family functioning score where negatively significant associated with stress level of nursing staff during COVID-19 pandemic. Interestingly. It was found that nurses working in government hospitals found to have high level of stress compared to private hospitals. Similarly the parenting and family adjustment problems were more in nursing families working in government hospitals compared to private hospitals.

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus which was declared as a world pandemic on March 11, 2020 by The World Health Organization (WHO). This was the time when all government all over the world imposed different degree of restriction to proven spreading of infection. Frontline workers especially nurses where the main people who are to be thanked for putting up the battle to save infected people. They worked day and night in bringing community health awareness on prevention, identification and diagnosis of COVID 19. They played major role in the speedy recovery of patients, gave life support and stayed with patients even in the end stage of their life. Nurses not

only risked their life but also their family members (Parel et.al 2020). They faced heavy workload, working conditions where there were no adequate personal protection and use of technologies (Jordan, 2020). Nurses were more at risk of developing psychological stress, anxiety, insomnia depression and mental health symptoms as they were facing critical situation, being involved in the direct diagnosis, treatment, and care of in patients as well as infected patients. Studies observed a wave of occupational stress in nurses due to lack of beds, PPE kits and other medical supplies in the hospitals and at Covid 19 testing centers (Abdullelah Al Thobaity and Farhan Alshammari2020).

Stress has been regarded as an occupational hazard since the mid-1950s. Occupational stress has been cited as a significant health problem. Stress is always harmful for relationships which vary depending on gender and individual and family characteristics. Occupational stress is a chronic condition were employee experiencing stress due to the responsibilities, conditions, environment, and other pressures of the workplace. The high job hassles and the combination of too much responsibility and too little authority have been identified as some of the primary sources of occupational stress amid nursing staff (Richardson and Rothstein 2008).

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused numerous unexpected challenges for many families, and these long-lasting demands likely contribute to higher stress for parents. Many other studies have found high stress was a common initial reaction to this pandemic (Rajkumar 2020 and Van *et al.*, 2020) and parents experienced more stress than non-parents (APA 2020). Parents were bearing an enormous burden during the pandemic.

Lot of research was done on impact of COVID 19 pandemic on health professional and their families abroad. But very few studies were conducted in the area of parenting and family adjustment of frontline workers during COVID 19 pandemic. Indian Government is still working out on prevention and control of the pandemic. But efforts are not being taken in the area of mental health of the frontline workers and their family functioning. Thus an attempt is made to understand the stress levels of Nurses and their parenting and family adjustments in order to extend support to the health workers. The present study was aimed to study the impact of stress on family functioning among nursing staff during COVID-19 pandemic.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

- i. Research design:** Ex- post facto research design was adopted for the current study.
- ii. Locale of the study:** The study was conducted in Guntur city of Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh.
- iii. Sampling procedure:** Purposive random sampling procedure was adopted in selecting the nurses. Nurses who are in the age group of 30-40 years married living with family and children working in government and private hospitals during COVID-19 pandemic were included in the sample.
- iv. Sample size:** Sample size for the present study was 120 which included 60 each from both government and private hospitals.
- v. Variables and measurement tools:** Stress among nurses was measured using Stress scale developed by Sharma and Sharma (2019) and Family functioning was assessed by using Parenting and family Adjustment scale developed by Sanders et al (2014).
- vi. Data collection procedure:** Interview method was used for data collection. After obtaining necessary permissions from the hospital authorities the respondents were selected and purpose of the study and instructions about filling the scale were explained to the respondents.
- vii. Statistical analysis:** The data was analyzed by using correlated and analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To study the relationship between stress and parenting and family adjustment of respondents, Karl Pearson correlation was applied for analysis. The results obtained are depicted in the following table:

Table 1. Impact of stress on parenting and family adjustment:

S. No	Parental and Family Adjustment Dimensions	Stress (r-value)
1	Parental consistency	0.005 ^{NS}
2	Coercive Parenting	0.042 ^{NS}
3	Positive encouragement	-0.131 ^{NS}
4	Parent child relation	-0.245**
Overall Parenting Score		-0.211*
5	Parental adjustment	-0.145 ^{NS}
6	Family relation	-0.087 ^{NS}
7	Parental team work	-0.211*
Overall Family adjustment Score		-0.165 ^{NS}
Parental and Family Adjustment		-0.216*

Note: *Significant at the 0.05 level ** Significant at the 0.01 level, NS”Non”significant

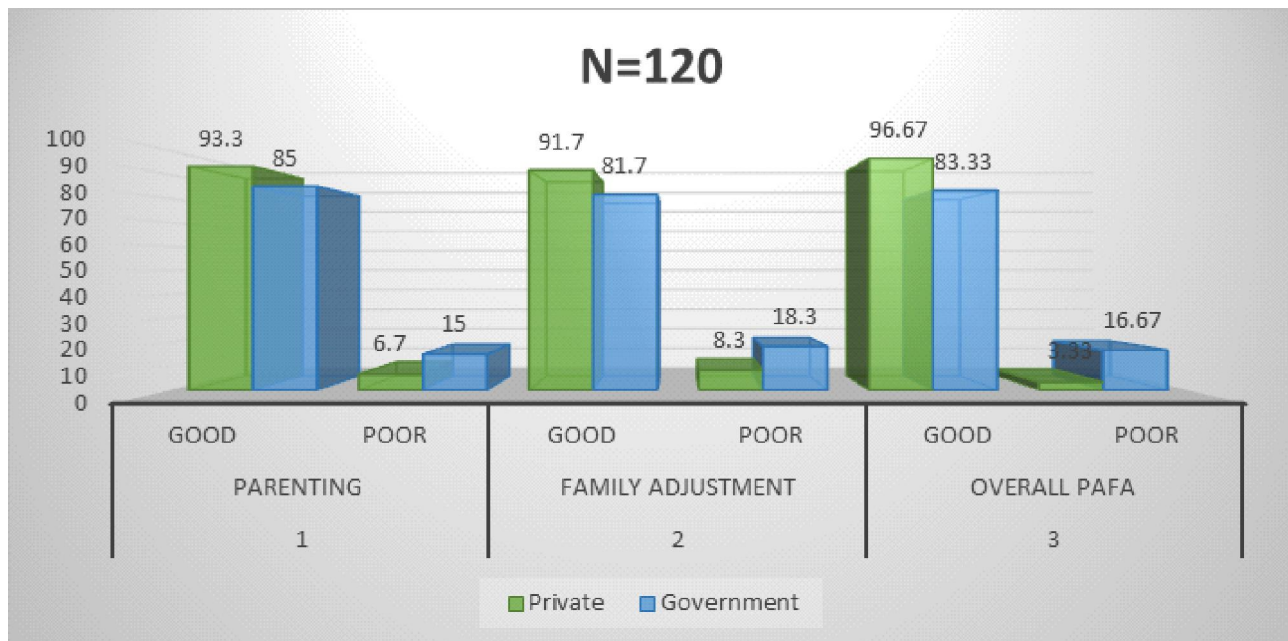


Fig 1. family functioning of nursing families working in government hospitals and private hospitals

Results revealed that parent child relations, parental team work, and overall parenting were negatively significant with stress in respondents. The overall parental family adjustment was negatively significant with stress level experienced by the respondents working in both private hospital and government hospital. This depicts that the respondents

with poor parenting practices, low family cohesion and poor coordination and communication with their children experienced high stress level. Lower age and education indicates less experience in parenting skills due to which stress increased. Working time of the respondents it as another reason because of which respondents were not able to spend more time with

their children. The fear of infection was another reason to stay away from the family leading to lower levels of unity in family.

Similar findings were found in study conducted by Orit *et al.* (2021) that showed significantly higher parenting stress, during the pandemic than previously. Respondent's higher level of education and lower physical health were significantly associated with higher parenting stress. They also found that the difficult circumstances during COVID 19 period, included lack of clarity, social and physical isolation, economic concerns, and health issues, which also lead to the parenting stress of new parents, who are facing this significant change in their lives in the shadow of a threatening and unstable reality.

Elizabeth *et al.* (2021) found that during the pandemic period parents reported higher rates of parent depression, anxiety, and stress, higher parenting irritability, lower family positive expressiveness, and higher alcohol consumption. In multivariable analyses, it was consistently found that younger parent age, increased financial deprivation, pre-existing parent and child physical and mental health conditions, COVID-19 psychological and environmental stressors, and housing dissatisfaction were associated with worse parent and child functioning and more strained family relationships.

The respondents who worked with their spouse in parenting showed lower stress levels. The results revealed that respondents who did not have good parent child relationship, and who worked on a team with the response where exhibiting higher stress.

The findings were supported by findings of Tam *et al.* (2021) who found that balanced levels of family cohesion and flexibility are more likely cope with psychological impacts of the pandemic. Similar findings were found in L. Adams *et al.* (2021) study

where in common strategies parents used to manage parenting difficulties included doing family activities together, keeping in touch with family/friends virtually, and keeping children on daily routines.

CONCLUSION

The nursing parents working in government hospital and private hospital were studied to find out the impact of stress on parenting and family adjustment. The results showed a negatively significant correlation of stress with parenting and family adjustment 0.01 levels of significant. The parent child relationship was negatively correlated with stress at adjustment 0.01 levels of significance were as parental team work was negatively correlated. This indicated that parent who had poor communication with child and who did not have good team work with family members experienced more stress compared to others. However the results conclude that through the nurses working in government hospital experienced high stress compared to private hospital the family functioning of both families did not get much affected with the stress level due to positive and cordial relatives among family members and good family support and care from the family.

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