

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY TO ASSESS THE PREVALENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS AMONG NURSES WORKING IN HOSPITAL SETTING GOA

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ABSTRACT

Mental illness affects all groups, with psychological distress among working professionals becoming a growing concern. Health care workers, particularly nurses, are vulnerable to depression, anxiety, and stress. This study aimed to assess psychological distress among nurses in hospital settings in Goa and examine its association with socio-demographic variables. Using a descriptive design, data were collected from 40 nurses via online surveys and analyzed with the DASS-21 scale. Results showed significant associations between distress levels and variables such as religion, income, habitat, family type, working area, and working hours ($p < 0.05$). Findings revealed that 37.5% experienced moderate depression, 30% had normal anxiety, and 47.5% reported normal stress, with varying levels across other categories. The null hypothesis was rejected, confirming significant links between psychological distress and socio-demographic factors, including age, gender, education, and work experience

KEYWORDS

- Assess, Prevalence, Psychological Distress, Nurse, Hospital, DASS- 21

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-moving world, stress has become a constant companion. It often shows up as fatigue, anxiety, and burnout, triggered by both personal pressures and demanding work environments. The body reacts with faster heart rate, higher blood pressure, and stress hormones like cortisol, which over time can harm both mental and physical health. Nursing demands focus, compassion, and emotional strength, yet ongoing stress often leads to errors, absenteeism, and burnout. Anxiety, depression, and exhaustion not only harm nurses personally but also reduce productivity and compromise patient care. Global studies, including research in India and Goa, report high levels of distress among nurses, with poor work conditions increasing risks and supportive environments improving motivation and health. Protecting nurses' mental well-being is as vital as the care they provide. Counseling, peer support, fair workloads, and healthier workplace cultures can strengthen resilience and ensure safer, more compassionate healthcare. Persistent exposure to heavy workloads, long hours, and emotional demands adversely affects both mental and physical health, ultimately diminishing care quality.

Evidence from national and international studies indicates a high prevalence of psychological distress among nurses, with significant proportions experiencing varying levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. Studies conducted in different countries, including India, have reported moderate to severe levels of psychological distress among nursing personnel. The situation has been further exacerbated in recent years due to increased professional demands and the lasting psychological impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite the growing recognition of mental health issues among nurses, there is limited published data focusing on psychological distress and its association with socio-demographic variables among nurses working in hospital settings in Goa.

Therefore, the present study was undertaken to assess psychological distress among nurses working in hospital settings in Goa and to determine its association with selected socio-demographic variables.

IV METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION

A quantitative research approach with a non-experimental, descriptive cross-sectional research design was adopted for the present study to assess psychological distress among nurses working in hospital settings of Goa.

The study was conducted in selected hospital settings of Goa. The target population comprised nurses working in the selected hospitals. A total of 40 nurses who fulfilled the inclusion criteria were selected for the study by using a non-probability convenience sampling technique. Nurses who were willing to participate and available at the time of data collection were included in the study, whereas nurses who were unwilling to participate were excluded.

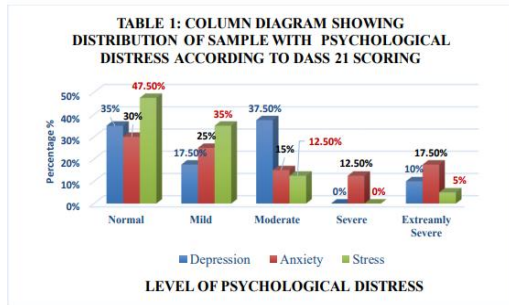
The tool used for data collection consisted of two sections. Section I included socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, religion, income, habitat, type of family, working area, and hours of working. Section II consisted of the standardized Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21) to assess the level of psychological distress among nurses.

Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, median, mode, and range were used to describe the sample characteristics and levels of psychological distress. Inferential statistics, including the chi-square test, were used to determine the association between psychological distress and selected socio-demographic variables.

Prior permission was obtained from the concerned hospital authorities. Informed consent was obtained from the participants before data collection. Data were collected using an online structured questionnaire

through Google Forms. Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were maintained throughout the study.

III RESULTS



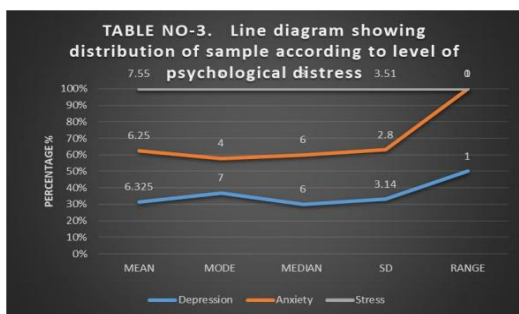
The analysis showed that 65% of nurses experienced varying levels of depression, 45% experienced anxiety, and 52.2% experienced stress as measured by the DASS-21 scale (Figures 1-3)

Category	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
1. Normal	35%	30%	48%
2. Mild	17.5%	25%	35%
3. Moderate	37.5%	15%	13%
4. Severe	0%	13%	0%
5. Extremely Severe	10%	18%	5%

TABLE 2. SHOWING LEVELS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS

The majority of nurses belonged to the age group of 21–30 years (60%) and were female (85%). Most participants were Hindu (72.5%), from rural areas (62.5%), and belonged to nuclear families (67.5%). Equal proportions of nurses were married and unmarried (50% each). With regard to professional qualification, 52.5% were B.Sc. Nursing graduates. Most nurses were working in government hospitals (80%), had less than three years of work experience (37.5%), and were working six hours per day (50%).

FIG:3 Findings related to Mean, Median, Mode, Standard deviation, Range of samples according to level of psychological distress



Chi-square analysis showed a significant association between psychological distress and selected socio-demographic variables such as religion ($\chi^2 = 0.72$), income ($\chi^2 = 0.72$), habitat ($\chi^2 = 4.66$), type of family ($\chi^2 = 0.87$), working area ($\chi^2 = 0.94$), and hours of working ($\chi^2 = 2.95$) at $p < 0.05$ level of significance. No significant association was found between psychological distress and variables such as age, gender, marital status, professional qualification, hospital setting, and work experience.

The data collected from 40 nurses working in selected hospital settings of Goa were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results are presented in terms of levels of psychological distress, socio-demographic characteristics, and association between psychological distress and selected socio-demographic variables.

IV DISCUSSION

The findings related to the levels of psychological distress revealed that a considerable proportion of nurses experienced depression, anxiety, and stress. The presence of psychological distress among nurses may be attributed to occupational factors such as workload, working hours, shift duties, and emotional demands of patient care. Similar findings have been reported in previous studies, indicating that nurses are vulnerable to psychological distress due to the nature of their profession.

The findings related to the association between psychological distress and selected socio-demographic variables showed a significant association with religion, income, habitat, type of family, working area, and hours of working. These variables may influence stress perception, coping ability, and work-life balance among nurses. However, no significant association was found with age, gender, marital status, professional qualification, hospital setting, and work experience, suggesting that psychological distress is more strongly influenced by work-related and environmental factors rather than personal characteristics.

Overall, the findings highlight the importance of identifying psychological distress among nurses and implementing supportive measures to promote mental well-being in hospital settings.

V RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The study can be repeated on the large-scale sample to validate and for better generalization of the finding
2. A similar study can be undertaken with a different intervention in various hospital setting

VI CONCLUSION

This descriptive study assessed psychological distress among nurses working in a hospital in Goa. The findings revealed a high prevalence of depression, anxiety, and stress, with moderate to severe levels being particularly common. Psychological distress was significantly associated with socio-demographic factors, highlighting the influence of both personal and workplace conditions. Overall, the study underscores the urgent need for institutional support and targeted interventions to promote the mental well-being of nurses, which is essential for sustaining quality patient care.

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