



PERCEIVED STRESS AMONG FIRST YEAR NURSING STUDENTS AT NURSES TRAINING SCHOOL, HAMBANTOTA

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Basic training of medical professions makes an enormous stress. In comparing with most of other diploma courses, the diploma of nursing has high degree of demand for skills and knowledge, which invariably put students at greater stress. Therefore measuring stress among nurses is important because their well-being has implications for stability in the healthcare work. This study was done to evaluate the perceived stress among nursing students at Nurses Training School, Hambantota. Descriptive cross sectional study was done at Nurses Training School (NTS), Hambantota. All first year nursing students were included. The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), a well-recognized tool to assess the perception of stress was used. Opinion from local experts was obtained to ensure appropriateness of certain items to the particular setting. List of names of first year students currently in the NTS were obtained and used as sampling frame. Students were reached during lunch break and questionnaires were distributed without interrupting routine studies. Descriptive statistics were calculated and appropriate significant tests were done to determine association with the use of SPSS. Ethical approval was sought from Ethics Review Committee, Ragama. The overall response rate was 85.7% (187 out of 218 students). There were more females in the study sample (n = 168, 89.8%) and mean age was 22.5 (SD 0.6) years. All participants were Sinhalese and Buddhists. Among all students, 178 (95.2%) followed biology for Advanced Level examination. The overall score was computed by adding marks allocated for each response. A total score of 20 or above was considered as having perceived stress. Mean score was 21.7 (SD 4.6). Out of all, 131 (70.1%) were in 20 or above range which is regarded as the stressed state. Perceived stress was significantly higher among male students ($p = < 0.001$) and those who were younger in the batch ($p = < 0.002$). Stress relieving programs should be designed and implemented to all first year Nursing Students.

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