THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRESS AND EATING HABITS IN NURSING STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The existing study performed was to assess the relationship between stress and eating habits among Nursing students in selected college of Nursing, Bathinda. Objectives under this study were: to assess the level of stress among Nursing students, to assess the eating habits among Nursing students, to find the correlation between stress and eating habits among Nursing students, to find out the association between stress and eating habits with their selected socio-demographic variables. A descriptive correlational research design was adopted for the study. Population for the study taken was B.Sc Nursing 3rd year students. Total sample size selected was 80 students by using non-probability convenient sampling technique. The present study revealed that the level of stress was assessed by SSQ and 51(63.75%) were having high stress and eating habits were assessed by CES and 44 (55%) were having poor habits. CES and SSQ were positively correlated with each other. Gender was significantly associated with eating habits. Other socio-demographic variables were not significantly associated with eating and level of stress.

Key words: Stress, Eating Habits, Nursing Students.

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INTRODUCTION

Food is vital necessity for every person, so needs every day. Everyone needs food for their survival and one of the foremost chapters learnt in life is that food is necessary to live so we must eat food. Life can be sustained only with adequate nourishment. Human beings need food for proper growth and development of the body and to lead an active and healthy life. Without food, nobody can survive for a longer period in this world. The eating habits can be influenced by a complex interplay of social, economic and technological forces.[1]

Stress can be explained as "the generalized, non-specific response of the body to any factor that overpower, or endanger to overpower, the body's adjusting abilities to maintain the balance".[2]

When the circumstances desire beat the coping abilities of the individuals, then stress arises and it leads to cognitive, behavioural and emotional distresses.[3] University/College students faces many stresses such as compete with peers/friends, pressure to succeed in life, academic overburden , adjusting with new environment, joining new guys and from time to time money issues .[4]

Long lasting stress results in the rise of obesity/a weight problem, which can activate the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis and the sympathetic nervous system. During stress, certain hormones like cortisol can provoke appetite. A rising level of cortisol or cortisol injection in the body accompanied with improved appetite, especially for those food which are rich in sugar and fat.[5]

It is pretended that food expending can be influenced by cortisol, which bind to the hypothalamus receptors. Likewise, corticotrophin, leptin and neuropeptide can be moderated by cortisol to trigger appetite.[6]

Maximum people live in a stressful situations, and we all the time eat as a way of dealing with stress or as a means to calm ourselves. Like, researchers who studied Chinese college students revealed that much more women had problems with their body than men and hence might feelingly eat.[7]

PROBLEM STATEMENT

A study to assess the relationship between stress and eating habits among Nursing students in selected college of Nursing, Bathinda.

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the level of stress among Nursing students.
2. To assess the eating habits among Nursing students.
3. To find the correlation between stress and eating habits among Nursing students.
4. To find out the association between stress and eating habits with their selected socio-demographic variables.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Research approach: Quantitative research approach was adopted for this study.

Research design: The research design used for this study was descriptive correlational research design.

Research setting: The study was conducted in college of nursing, Adesh University, Bathinda.

Population: Population for the study taken was B.Sc Nursing 3rd year students.

Sample size: Total sample size was 80 students.

Sampling technique: Sample was selected by using non-probability convenient sampling technique.

CRITERIA FOR SAMPLE SELECTION

Inclusive criteria:

1. Students who are willing to participate in the study.
2. Students who are available and cooperative at the time of data collection.
3. Male and female Nursing students aged 19 to 21 were asked to participate in the study.

Exclusive criteria:

1. Students who are on leave and sick during the time of data collection.
2. Students who are non-cooperative.

DEVELOPMENT OF TOOL

Section A: It includes socio-demographic variables such as Age (in years), Gender, Religion and Type of staying.

Section B: It includes Compulsive Eating Scale (CES) (Kagan & Squires 1984) and Stressful Situations Questionnaire (SSQ) (Hodges & Felling, 1970). CES was used to measure uncontrollable eating patterns of the participants and SSQ was used to measure stress in the participants. CE scale has 8 items the response options were to circle the one answer for each question (a. Never b. Once or twice a year c. Once a month d. Once a week e. More than once a week) that assesses the inability to control one's eating behavior in terms of overeating and eating when not hungry. SSQ has 40 items the response options were (1-None at all, 2-Slight, 3-Moderate, 4-Considerable, 5-Extreme) that assesses the level of reported apprehension or anxiety in various situations relevant to nursing students.

Section I

TABLE-I

Frequency and Percentage distribution of socio-demographic variables of B.Sc Nursing students. N=80

S.No.	Socio-demographic variables	f	%
1.	Age (in years) a) 19 b) 20 c) 21	 10 45 25	 12.5 56.25 31.25
2.	Gender a) Male b) Female	 35 45	 43.75 56.25
3.	Religion a) Sikh b) Hindu c) Muslim	 18 04 58	 22.5 5 72.5
4.	Type of staying a) Day-scholar b) Hosteller	 04 76	 5 95

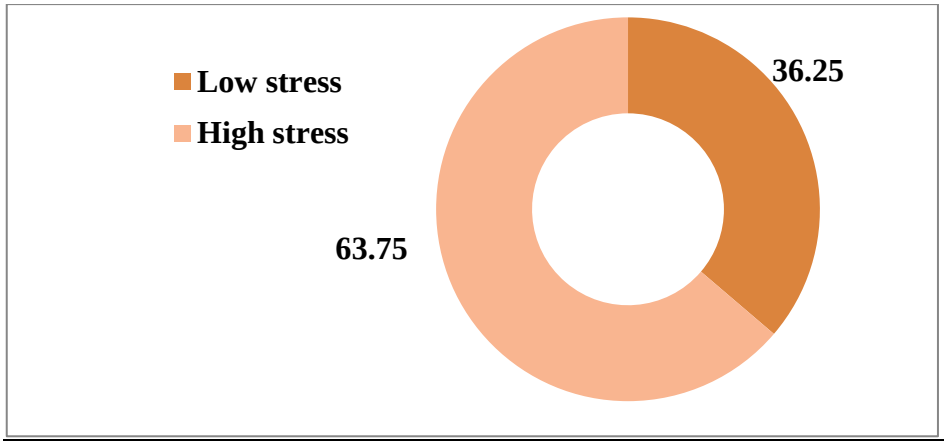
Results:

Section II

Assess the level of stress among Nursing students.

Table II **N=80**

Level of stress (by SSQ)	f	%
Low stress (38-114)	29	36.25
High stress (115-190)	51	63.75



Assess the eating habits among nursing students.

Table III **N=80**

Eating Habits (by CES)	f	%
Good Habits (8-24)	36	45
Poor Habits (25-40)	44	55

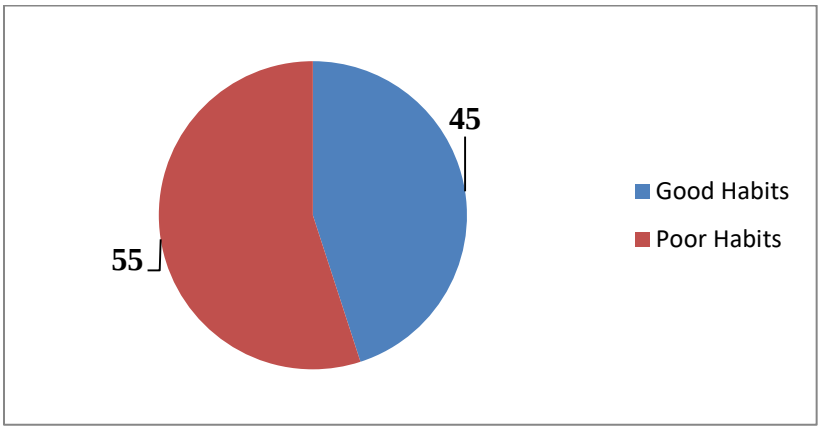


Table IV

Correlation between stress and eating habits among nursing students.

Variables	r	p-value
Level of stress	0.417	0.000
Eating habits		

Pearson 'r' was used to analyze the data. There was a positive co-relation between level of stress and eating habits.

TABLE-V

Association between stress and eating habits with their selected socio-demographic variables. **N=80**

S.No.	Demographic-variables	Level of stress				χ^2	df	p-value
		Low		High				
		f	%	f	%			
1.	**Age (in Years)**							
	a. 19	3	3.75	7	8.75	0.1942	2	0.9075
	b. 20	19	23.75	32	40			**NS**
	c. 21	7	8.75	12	15			
2.	**Gender**							
	a. Male	13	16.25	22	27.5	0.0215	1	0.8835
	b. Female	16	20	29	36.25			**NS**
3.	**Religion**							
	a. Sikh	7	8.75	13	16.25	4.4502	2	0.1079
	b. Hindu	4	5	1	1.25			**NS**
	c. Muslim	18	22.5	37	46.25			
4.	**Type of staying**							
	a. Day scholar	4	5	6	7.5	0.0695	1	0.7920
	b. Hosteller	25	31.25	45	56.25			**NS**

S.No.	Demographic-variables	Eating Habits				χ^2	df	p-value
		Good		Poor				
		f	%	f	%			
1.	**Age (in Years)**							
	a. 19	4	5	4	5	0.5073	2	0.7759
	b. 20	25	31.25	27	33.75			**NS**
	c. 21	7	8.75	11	13.75			
2.	Gender							
	a. Male	11	13.75	24	30	5.4984	1	0.0189
	b. Female	26	32.5	19	23.75			**S**
3.	Religion							
	a. Sikh	9	11.25	11	13.75	0.4068	2	0.8159
	b. Hindu	3	3.75	2	2.5			**NS**
	c. Muslim	25	31.25	30	37.5			
4.	Type of staying							
	a. Day scholar	3	3.75	7	8.75	1.0390	1	0.3080
	b. Hosteller	33	41.25	37	46.25			**NS**

Among all socio-demographic variables, Gender was significantly associated with eating habits at $p<0.05$. None of other socio-demographic variables were significantly associated with level of stress and eating habits.

DISCUSSION

The present study revealed that majority 45 (56.25%) students were under the age group of 20 years, Maximum 45 (56.25%) were females, 58 (72.5%) were belonged to Muslim religion and most of 76 (95%) were staying Hosteller. The level of stress was assessed by SSQ and 51(63.75%) were having high stress and eating habits were assessed by CES and 44 (55%) were having poor habits. CES and SSQ were positively correlated with each other. Gender was significantly associated with eating habits. Other socio-demographic variables were not significantly associated with eating and level of stress.

Similar study was conducted by **(M. Azza Aziz-El Abd, et al.)**[8] who highlighted the stress and eating habits among students and the results revealed that (86%) had high level of stress while (94.5%) had poor eating scale. There was positive strong correlation at r=0.6 between CES and SSQ (p=0.001).

Another similar study conducted by (**Gower Brittany, E. Hand Christina and K. Zachariah)**[9] who highlighted the relationship between stress and eating in College-Aged Students and the results revealed that a significant correlation between the amount of over-eating and stress was found at r = 0.3

CONCLUSION:

At the end, the study concluded that there was association between eating habits and exposure to stressful situations among nursing students. Students living at their home displayed good eating habits than residing outside their home. It is necessary for students to be aware of the possible correlation between stress and uncontrollable eating habits. From the study it suggested that during stress, students should be counselled properly otherwise it leads to increase in BMI , obesity and other serious problems.

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