Stress Levels among Wives of Alcoholics and Non-alcoholics

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The wife of an alcoholic, who enters into marital life with a heart full of expectations, becomes disillusioned when she faces tough life situations, from the alcoholic husband. She may experience psychological problems (Jayarama, 1988) due to her life with the alcoholic husband. The wives of alcohol-dependent individuals experience high levels of stress from dual problems: husband’s alcoholism and domestic violence by the husband, and are thus a high-risk group. It is required to study these aspects like stress, coping and domestic violence experienced by them.

Objectives
- To assess the level of stress among the wives of alcoholics and non-alcoholics.
- To determine the association between the level of stress and selected demographic variables of the wives of alcoholics.

Research Methodology and Materials
A descriptive research approach was adopted and the study was carried out in Hanumanahalli Village, Kolar district for a period of one month (January 2007). A sample of sixty (30 wives of alcoholics and 30 wives of non-alcoholics) were chosen using convenience sampling technique, after written informed consent. Interview Technique was used to collect data on an average; it took about 30 minutes to interview each subject. The interview was conducted at home between 4 pm to 6 pm. Nearly 2 to 3 subjects were interviewed each day.

The wives of alcoholics and non-alcoholics were evaluated on a pre-designed proforma for information on socio-demographic variables like type of family, duration of marital life, number of children, socio-economic status, occupation, and history of alcoholism in husband and history of domestic violence.

The stress level among the wives of alcoholics and the non-alcoholics were measured by a Perceived Stress Scale (PSS). It was developed by Sheldon Cohen and colleagues (1983). It is a 14-item five point rating scale. The PSS is designed to measure the degree to which situations in one’s life are appraised as stressful.

Test-retest reliability was 0.85 and 0.55. The co-efficient alpha reliability for PSS was 0.84, 0.85, and 0.86 on three groups of samples. Item number 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10 & 13 are positively started items. This means who score above 28 is considered having perceived positive stress.

For the present study 28 was taken as cut of point for assessing the level of stress. This means who score above 28 are considered having perceived positive stress.

Results
The findings of the study are presented in tables 1, 2 and 3.

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the wives of alcoholics. The data reveals that all were aged less than 50 years and majority (43.33%) were between the age group of 20-30 years. Out of 30 sample subjects 83.33 percent belong to nuclear family. About 46.66 percent of the sample were married for more than 10 years and 46.66 percent have more than 3 children. 76.66 percent of the sample had monthly income of Rs. 1000-2000. 60 percent worked as colliers and 60 percent were found to suffer from domestic violence.

Table 2 presents comparison of stress level scores among wives of alcoholics and non alcoholics show that there is a significant difference (p < 0.05) between the stress level scores of the wives of alcoholics and the wives of non-alcoholics.
Table 1 shows that there is no association between the level of stress and the selected demographic variables of the wives of alcoholics.

**Findings**

The study reveals that:

- Most of the sample is between the age group of 20-30 years i.e. nearly 43.33 percent of the wives of alcoholics and 56.66 percent of wives of non-alcoholics.
- 83.33 percent of wives of alcoholics and 56.66 percent of wives of non-alcoholics belong to nuclear family.
- 46.66 percent of the wives of alcoholics are married for more than 10 years and 40 percent of the wives of non-alcoholics are married for more than 5 years and above.
- Most of the wives of the alcoholics i.e. 46.66 percent have 3 children and above and 46.66 percent of wives of non-alcoholics have 2 children.
- 70 percent of the wives of alcoholics and 50 percent of the wives of non-alcoholics belong to an income group of Rs. 1000-2000 per month.
- 23.33 percent of wives of alcoholics are housewives and 60 percent of wives of non-alcoholics work in the field.
- 60 percent of wives of alcoholics presented with the history of domestic violence.
- There was a significant difference (p<0.05) between the stress level scores of the wives of alcoholics and that of the wives of non-alcoholics.
- There was no association between the stress scores and the demo-
graphic variables of the wives of alcoholics.

Limitations of the Study

- The sample size was small comprising only 60 (30 wives of alcoholics & 30 wives of non-alcoholics).
- Convenience sampling technique was used.

Recommendations

Based on the study it is recommended that,

- The study can be replicated on a large sample in different rural or urban slum areas.
- A comparative study can be conducted by comparing the level of stress among the wives of alcoholics and the wives of non-alcoholics in urban slum areas.
- An experimental study can be conducted to analyse the effectiveness of psychological nursing interventions on reduction of stress level among the wives of alcoholics.

Conclusion

Research needs to focus on the impact of stress on health. A nurse plays a pivotal role both in hospital and community setting in improving the health of the individual. Innovative approaches in this field have to be initiated in nursing.

References


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-Chief Editor