

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

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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 collies and 60 percent were found to suffer from domestic violence.

The data related to demographic characteristics of the wives of non-alcoholics revealed that 56.66 percent were in the age group of 20-30 years and 56.66 percent belong to nuclear family. 40 percent were married for 5-10 years and 40 percent were married for 10 & above years. 46.66 percent had 2 children. 50 percent of the sample had an income of Rs. 1000-2000. Nearly 60 percent worked in the fields.

Table 2 presents comparison of stress level scores among wives of alcoholics wives of 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-3 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 alco-

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of the Wives of Alcoholics and Wives of Non-Alcoholics

S.No	Demographic Characteristics	Total sample of alcoholic's wives	Percentage	Total sample for non alcoholic's wives	Percentage
1.	Age 20-30 years 30-40 years 40-50 years	13 11 06	43.33 36.66 20.00	17 08 05	56.66 26.66 16.66
2.	Type of Family Nuclear Joint	25 05	83.33 16.66	17 13	56.66 43.33
3.	Duration of Marital Life 0-5 years 5-10 years 10 & above	03 13 14	10.00 43.33 46.66	06 12 12	20 40 40
4.	Number of Children No. Children 1 2 3 & above	01 08 14	03.33 26.66 46.66	01 03 12	3.33 10 40
5.	Monthly Income Rs. 1000-2000 Rs. 2001-3000 Rs. 3001-4000 Rs. 4001-5000	21 06 02 01	76.66 20.00 00.00 03.33	15 11 03 01	50 36.66 10 3.33
6.	Occupation Housewife Coolie Agriculture	07 18 05	23.33 60.00 16.66	09 03 18	30 10 60
7.	History of domestic violence due to husband's alcoholism Present Absent	18 12	60 40	-- --	-- --

- holics 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 dif-

- ference ($p < 0.05$) 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-

Table 2
Comparison of stress Level Scores among the Wives of Alcoholics and the wives of Non-Alcoholics

Category	Mean Score	't' value	df	p-value
Wives of alcoholics	29.46	2.33	58	p<0.05
Wives of Non-Alcoholics	27.53			

Table 3
Association between the Level of Stress and Selected Demographic Variables of the Wives of Alcoholics

S.No.	Variables	X2 Value	p value	Level of Significance
1	Age	0.072	>0.05	Not significant
2	Type of Family	0.384	>0.05	Not significant
3	Duration of Marital Life	1.49	>0.05	Not significant
4	Number of children	2.33	>0.05	Not significant
5	Monthly income	4.32	>0.05	Not significant
6	Occupation	4.215	>0.05	Not significant
7	History of domestic violence	1.68	>0.05	Not significant

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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