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Demographic characteristics & job stress among nurses in government & private sector

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Abstract

The study aimed to explore the demographic characteristics and job stress among nurses working in selected Government & private sector hospitals of Assam.

The study sample consisted of 100 numbers of nurses working in two selected hospitals, 50 from a Govt sector hospital and 50 from a private hospital of Assam, India, selected randomly for the purpose of the study. The study adopted descriptive survey design and data was collected using structured questionnaire which consisted of the demographic proforma and the OSI. The data obtained was analyzed in terms of frequencies and percentages. Findings suggest that majority i.e. 70% of the samples from Govt. sector hospitals reported high level of job stress. Among those sample working in the private sector, majority (74%) reported moderate level of stress.

Study observed wide variations in the demographic characteristics of nurses working in different settings. Study also concludes that the Level of job stress differs between Govt and private settings.

Keywords: Nurses, job stress, demographic characteristics

Introduction

Stress is often labeled the silent killer because its affects may not be readily apparent, and may go undiagnosed or take a long time before permanent damage is done. Stress related to work often called as occupational stress has been established to cause tremendous impact on health as well as work performance.

Work-related stress is a widespread problem and has been shown to be costly to both individuals and organizations (Stanks, 2005) ^[1].

The National Health and Safety Commission (NHSC) in Australia, estimates that work-related stress accounts for the longest stretches of absenteeism. In Australia, the total cost of workers' compensation claims for stress-related conditions is estimated at more than \$200 million a year. According to the National Health and Safety Commission, work-related stress accounts for the longest stretches of absenteeism (Keen Samantha, 2007) ^[2].

Soderfeldt M, Soderfeldt B, Warg, L-E in 1995 ^[3], found that generally health care workers are considered as an occupational group running an above average risk of stress. Nursing profession is one such profession with high levels of job stress.

Statement of the problem

Demographic characteristics and job stress among nurses working in Government & private sector hospitals of Guwahati city, Assam.

Objectives of the study

- To determine the demographic characteristics of nurses working in Government and Private Sector Hospitals.
- To identify level of job stress among nurses working in Government and Private Sector Hospitals.

Methodology

Research approach and Design: Quantitative approach was used. Descriptive Survey design was adopted for the study.

Study setting: Selected Govt. & Private sector hospital of Guwahati city, Assam.

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Population: Nurses working in selected Govt. & Private sector hospital of Guwahati city, Assam.

Sample size: 100 nurses, 50 working in Govt. sector & 50 from private sector

Sampling Technique: Simple Random Sampling

Description of Tool

The tool consisted of two parts

Part A: Socio-Demographic Proforma

The variables included were- age, religion, general academic qualification, designation, professional qualification, years of experience, type of duty, number of night shift, and marital status.

Part B: Job stress questionnaire

The PART B of the structured questionnaire consisted of the

OSI- Occupational Stress Index scale, constructed by Dr. A. K. Srivastava & Dr. A. P. Singh of Department of Psychology, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. The tool consists of 46 items, each to be rated on the 5 point scale- strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree. The items relate to almost all relevant components of the job life which cause stress in some way or the other.

Results

1. Demographic characteristics of samples

Majority (42%) of the nurses working in Govt. sector belonged to the age group of more than 40 years, whereas among the nurses working in private sector most of them (34%) were between 26 to 30 years of age.

The following table shows the Distribution of age of the participants.

Table 1: Distribution of age of the participants

Variable	Items	Govt sector (n ₁ =50)		Private sector (n ₂ =50)	
		Number of Nurses (Frequency)	Percentage	Number of Nurses (Frequency)	Percentage
Age (in years)	Upto 25	4	8%	13	26%
	26 - 30	6	12%	17	34%
	31 - 35	9	18%	9	18%
	36 - 40	10	20%	11	22%
	>40	21	42%	-	-
	Total	50	100	50	100%

Study found that majority of the nurses working in both the Govt. as well as private sector hospitals were Hindu by religion i.e. 58% and 54% respectively. However in the Govt. sector 38% of the participants followed Islam religion in contrast to the participants from the private sector where 44%

participants were from Christian religion. Only 4% of the participants from Govt. sector were from Christian religion and only 2% of private sector nurses were from Islam religion. Table 2 shows the details.

Table 2: Distribution of participants by their religion

Variable	Items	Govt. sector (n ₁ =50)		Private sector (n ₂ =50)	
		Number of Nurses (Frequency)	Percentage	Number of Nurses (Frequency)	Percentage
Religion	Hinduism	29	58%	27	54%
	Islam	19	38%	1	2%
	Christianity	2	4%	22	44%
	Total	50	100%	50	100%

Table 3: Distribution of participants by their general academic qualification

Variable	Items	Govt. sector (n ₁ =50)		Private sector (n ₂ =50)	
		Number of Nurses (Frequency)	Percentage	Number of Nurses (Frequency)	Percentage
General Academic Qualification	Higher Secondary	37	74%	41	82%
	Graduate	12	24%	7	14%
	Post Graduate	1	2%	2	4%
	Total	50	100%	50	100%

Majority of the participant nurses both from Govt and private hospital had the general academic qualification of higher secondary education which is the minimum requirement for entry into any nursing diploma or degree programme. But a significant percentage of nurses i.e. 12% among nurses from

Govt job and 14% among nurses from private job were graduates before coming into professional nursing. Only 1 (one) participant nurse (2%) from Govt hospital and 2 (two) working in the private hospital (4%) had done post graduation before joining nursing profession.

Table 4: Distribution of subjects by their professional qualification

		N(n ₁ +n ₂)=100			
Variable	Items	Govt. sector (n ₁ =50)		Private sector (n ₂ =50)	
		Number of Nurses (Frequency)	Percentage	Number of Nurses (Frequency)	Percentage
Professional Qualification	GNM	42	84%	28	56%
	BSc (N)	8	16%	21	42%
	MSc (N)	-	-	1	2%
	Total	50	100%	50	100%

Study reflects that majority of the practicing nurses from Govt. hospital were having professional qualification of General Nursing cum Midwifery diploma i.e. 84%. However

in the private sector, 56% were diploma nurses and another significant number 42% were graduate nurses either having Basic B.Sc or Post Basic B.Sc Nursing degree.

Table 5: Distribution of participants by their designation

		N(n ₁ +n ₂)=100			
Variable	Items	Govt. sector (n ₁ =50)		Private sector (n ₂ =50)	
		Number of Nurses (Frequency)	Percentage	Number of Nurses (Frequency)	Percentage
Designation	Staff Nurse	41	82%	40	80%
	Shift-in Charge	1	2%	4	8%
	Unit/Ward In-charge	8	16%	4	8%
	Infection Control Nurse	-	-	1	2%
	Nurse Educator	-	-	1	2%
	Total	50	100%	50	100%

Majority i.e. 82% of the nurses in Govt. hospital and 80% of nurses working in private hospital were working in the capacity of staff nurse. Relatively a very small percentage of the studied samples were working in other capacities like shift- in charges (2% in Govt. sector & 8% in private sector),

unit/ward in-charges (16% in Govt. sector & 8% in private sector), infection control nurse (none in Govt., only 1 in private sector) and nurse educator (none in Govt., only 1 in private sector).

Table 6: Distribution of participants by their years of professional experience

		N(n ₁ +n ₂)=100			
Variable	Items	Govt sector (n ₁ =50)		Private sector (n ₂ =50)	
		Number of Nurses (Frequency)	Percentage	Number of Nurses (Frequency)	Percentage
Years of Professional Experience	0 - 1 year	-	-	4	8%
	1 - 3 yrs	3	6%	18	36%
	3 - 5 yrs	3	6%	5	10%
	5 - 10 yrs	15	30%	12	24%
	> 10 yrs	29	58%	11	22%
	Total	50	100%	50	100%

Regarding the years of professional experience the nurses of Govt. and private sector showed different pictures. Among the nurses working in the Govt. sector, majority (58%) had work experience of more than 10 years. In contrast to this, only 22% had more than 10 years of professional experience in the

private hospital. Almost an equal proportion of studied samples working in both the Govt. (30%) and private sector (24%) hospitals were having professional experience between 5- 10 years.

Table 7: Distribution of participants by their type of duty

		N(n ₁ +n ₂)=100			
Variable	Items	Govt sector (n ₁ =50)		Private sector (n ₂ =50)	
		Number of Nurses (Frequency)	Percentage	Number of Nurses (Frequency)	Percentage
Type of Duty	Fixed duty	15	30%	7	14%
	Shift duty	35	70%	43	86%
	Total	50	100%	50	100%

Nurses working in both Govt. and private sector hospitals showed that majority had shift duty. Among the 50 nurses from Govt hospital, 35 of them (70%) had shift duty. Also 43

out of 50 (86%) participants from private hospital were also engaged in shift duty. The remaining i.e. 30% in Govt. and 14% in private had fixed kind of duty with no night duty.

Table 8: Distribution of participants according to number of night shift duty in a monthN(n₁+n₂)=100

Variable	Items	Govt sector (n ₁ =50)		Private sector (n ₂ =50)	
		Number of Nurses (Frequency)	Percentage	Number of Nurses (Frequency)	Percentage
Number of Night Shift in a month	No night duty	2	4%	4	8%
	1 - 5 days	37	74%	10	20%
	6 - 12 days	11	22%	34	68%
	Above 12 days	-	-	2	4%
	Total	50	100%	50	100%

The present study found that there are differences in the number of night shift among nurses in Govt. and private sector. 74% which is majority in the Govt sector reported that

they have 1 -5 days of night shift duties in a month. This however is different in the private sector, where 68% had night shift duties between 6- 12days in a month.

Table 9: Distribution of participants by their marital statusN(n₁+n₂)=100

Variable	Items	Govt sector (n ₁ =50)		Private sector (n ₂ =50)	
		Number of Nurses (Frequency)	Percentage	Number of Nurses (Frequency)	Percentage
Marital Status	Unmarried	14	28%	30	60%
	Married	33	66%	20	40%
	Widow	3	6%	-	-
	Total	50	100%	50	100%

Majorities (66%) of the nurses working in the Govt. sector were married and majorities (60%) of the nurses from private hospitals were unmarried.

2. Findings related to job stress among nurses

Table 10: Level of Occupational StressN(n₁+n₂)=100

Occupational Stress scores	Nurses in Govt sector		Nurses in Private sector	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Low	-	-	10	20%
Moderate	15	30%	37	74%
High	35	70%	3	6%
Total	50	100%	50	100%

Findings suggest that majority i.e. 70% of the samples from Govt. sector hospitals reported high level of job stress. Among those subjects working in the private sector, majority (74%) reported moderate level of stress.

Discussion

Study found that there is a wide variation in the demographic characteristics of nurses working in Govt. hospital to that of those nurses working in private sector hospitals. Like Majority (42%) of the nurses working in Govt. sector belonged to the age group of more than 40 years, whereas among the nurses working in private sector most of them (34%) were between 26 to 30 years of age.

There is significant demographic difference in terms of religion also. Hinduism was the major religion of the nurses working in both the Govt. & private hospitals. However in the Govt. sector 38% of the participants followed Islam religion in contrast to the participants from the private sector where 44% participants followed Christianity. This is as per the fact that Guwahati city is the business hub of North East India and therefore nurses working in the private hospitals of Guwahati city used to be mostly from the nearby North Eastern States of India where Christianity is a dominant religion.

Majority i.e. 82% of the nurses in Govt. hospital and 80% of nurses working in private hospital were working in the capacity of staff nurse. Relatively smaller sections from the studied samples were working in other capacities like shift- in

charges (2% in Govt. sector & 8% in private sector), unit/ward in-charges (16% in Govt. sector & 8% in private sector), infection control nurse (none in Govt., only 1 in private sector) and nurse educator (none in Govt., only 1 in private sector). This is because in the Govt hospitals there is no such clear cut designation of an Infection control nurse or nurse educator.

Majorities (66%) of the nurses working in the Govt. sector were married and majorities (60%) of the nurses from private hospitals were unmarried. This relates well with the age group of the nurses.

Findings of the present study suggest that majority i.e. 70% of the samples from Govt. sector hospitals reported high level of job stress. Whereas among those sample working in the private sector, majority (74%) reported moderate level of stress.

From the literature search also differences were evident in a number of investigations that aimed to compare the work stress among nurses working in various settings. In one such study it was found that nurses working in public hospitals reported more stress than private hospitals. However, surprisingly nurses' satisfaction with their job increased particularly in public hospitals, which may be attributable to age, improvements in monetary compensation, and organizational support (Tyson PD, Pongruengphant R; 2004) [4].

In a Indian study conducted by Gandhi S, K Lalitha (2008) ^[5] in a hospital in Bangalore also found that the total percentage of stress index was 48% indicating an overall moderate level of stress perception by the study subjects.

Also majority i.e. 42% of the sample reported severe stress in another study conducted by Pawar M (2014) ^[6] among the nurses working in Intensive care units in selected hospitals of Mumbai.

Conclusion

The present investigation observed wide variations in the demographic characteristics of nurses working in different settings. Study also concludes that the Level of job stress differs between Govt and private settings.

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