Stress and Stressors among Non-Medical Undergraduate Students of University of Lahore

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ABSTRACT

Background: Stress is a pervasive and debilitating experience that affects individuals from all walks of life, including university students. The undergraduate years are a critical period of transition and growth, marked by significant academic, social, and emotional challenges. Non-medical undergraduate students, in particular, may face unique stressors related to their field of study, academic expectations, and future career prospects. **Objective:** The study aimed to investigate stress levels, identify stress sources, and establish associations between stress and various stressors. **Study Design:** Cross-sectional study. **Settings:** Department of Pharmacology, University of Lahore, Lahore Pakistan. **Duration:** 01-01-2022 to 31-12-2022. **Methods:** A total of 212 participants were included through non-probability convenient sampling from 4th and final year PharmD students, excluding physiotherapy, nutrition and diet, and MBBS students. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire covering demographic information and stress-related queries. **Results:** The findings revealed that academic and psychological concerns were predominant stressors. High parental expectations, stage fright, daily task management challenges, the extensive academic curriculum, and frequent examinations emerged as major stress contributors. **Conclusion:** Non-medical undergraduate students reported elevated stress levels, primarily originating from academic and psychological domains. Acknowledging these stressors is crucial as they significantly impact students. The findings suggest the necessity for proactive stress management strategies to enhance students' well-being and academic performance.

Keywords: Stress, Stressors, Non-Medical Undergraduate Students, Academic Stress, Psychological Stress, University of Lahore.

INTRODUCTION

Stress is a subjective expertise that hinders an individual's path to achieving his or her goals.[1] In keeping with the World Health Organization (WHO), mental diseases are one of the contributors to the dysfunction among folks between the ages of fourteen to forty-four. Stress ultimately decreases the sustained attention, decision-making ability, and judgment of an individual which might impact tutorial performance significantly. Stressors are anything that tosses the mind-body-spirit connection out of equilibrium. Generally, the stressors among the students could be several assignments, competition with alternative students, the concern of failure, financial problems, and poor peer relations.[2] Previous studies have classified stressors into three major categories: academic, psychosocial, and health-related.[3] University students go through transitory period of their life which can be one of the most nerve-racking times in a person's life.[4] An adequate degree of stress is useful and permits the student to become a more diligent and goal oriented. Contrarily, persistently high levels of stress could lead to appreciable psychological and physical glitches like deficient scholastic performance, anxiety, drug abuse, and even suicidal thoughts.[5] Failing to cope with the stressors causes deterioration of educational and skilled performances

and wil increases psychological distres.[6] The study is conducted to access the stress and potential stressors among undergraduate nonmedical students

OBJECTIVES

1. To investigate the levels of stress among undergraduate non-medical students. 2. To identify the primary sources of stress experienced by undergraduate non-medical students. 3. To explore the association between various stressors and the overall level of stress among undergraduate non-medical students.

METHODS

A cross-sectional descriptive study using self-administered questionnaire was conducted among PharmD undergraduates in university of Lahore. Study was conducted at the Department of Pharmacology, University of Lahore. The time required for this study was one year. Non-probability convenient sampling was used. Sample size of 212 undergraduate nonmedical students was calculated by taking 95% confidence interval, 5% margin of error and level of stress among nonmedical students as 83.5%.

A total of 212 undergraduates of PharmD from 4th and final year studying in UOL were invited to participate in this study.

Students of physiotherapy, students of nutrition and diet and students of MBBS were excluded from this study.

The purpose of this study was explained to all the participants and informed consent was obtained. A self-administered questionnaire containing demographic information as well as questions regarding various stressors like academic, social, or financial was used to collect the data from all the participants. All the information gathered through the questionnaire was kept confidential and the privacy of participants was ensured. Data analysis is recorded on data sheets by every individual and is statistically analyzed by SPSS.

RESULTS

These were 212 participants. The most common source of stress was related to academic and psychological concerns. High parental expectations, stage fright, difficulty in managing daily tasks, vastness of academic curriculum and frequency of examinations were most frequently and severely occurring sources of stress. The percentage is showing in figure 1, while table 1. Is given bar graph of data. The statistical analysis is also shown in next table. The study also provided statistical analysis of the data, which is shown in table 1 and a bar graph in figure 1.

The study involved 212 participants, likely comprising undergraduate students not enrolled in medical programs at the prestigious University of Lahore. Its main aim was to understand the sources of stress among this specific group of students. The results divulged that the most prevalent stressors were connected to academic and psychological factors.

This study identified and investigated several specific stressors experienced by the participants. Firstly, participants reported stress due to the academic and career expectations set by their parents, indicating elevated parental expectations as a significant source of pressure. Additionally, performance anxiety was highlighted, referring to the feelings of nervousness when students have to demonstrate their abilities, such as during presentations or exams. Another notable stressor identified was the challenge of balancing various responsibilities in daily life, including coursework, extracurricular activities, and personal commitments, which added to students' overall stress levels. Moreover, the extensive and demanding nature of the academic curriculum, including the volume of material and rigorous expectations, emerged as a stressor for many participants. Finally, the regularity of exams and the pressure to perform well contributed significantly to the students' stress levels. The study likely employed both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection, as indicated by the inclusion of statistical analysis in Table 1 and a bar graph in Figure 1, providing visual representations of the data to enhance understanding of the relationships among variables.

Table 1 could potentially encompass information such as frequency, percent, valid percent, commutative percent and other statistical measures pertaining to the identified stressors. Figure 1, the bar graph, could effectively illustrate the prevalence or intensity of stress associated with each factor, providing a concise overview of the findings.

This study effectively illuminates the specific stressors encountered by undergraduate students who are not pursuing medical degrees at the University of Lahore. Furthermore, it accentuates the significance of addressing these concerns in order to promote the well-being and academic achievements of these students expressed in table 1.

The data collected from the participants was statistically analyzed using SPSS software. The specific details of the data analysis, such as the specific statistical tests used or the specific variables analyzed, are not mentioned in the provided sources. However, it can be inferred that the data analysis aimed to examine the relationship between different stressors (academic, social, financial, etc.) and the level of stress reported by the non-medical

undergraduate students at the University of Lahore. The analysis likely involved calculating descriptive statistics, such as means, standard deviations, and percentages, to summarize the data and identify patterns or trends. The statistical analysis may have also included inferential statistics, such as correlations or regression analysis, to explore the relationships between variables and determine the significance of the findings as shown in Table 2.
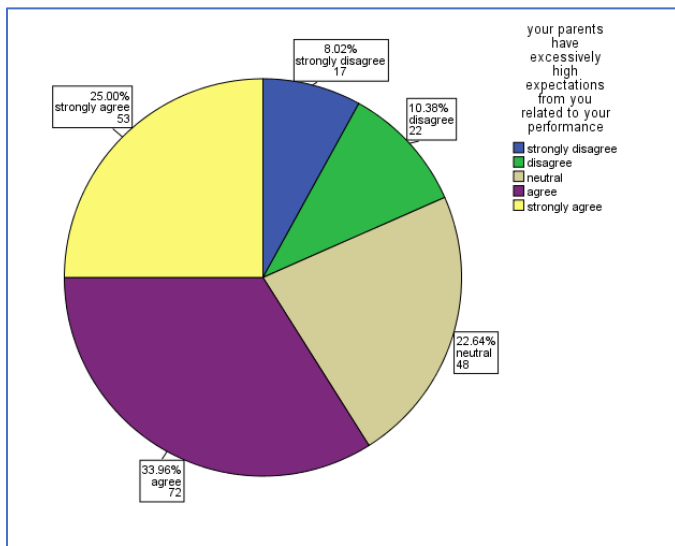
Figure 1: Demographic data

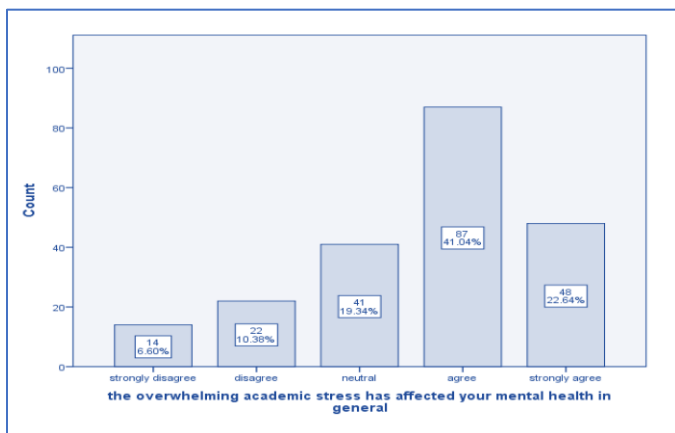### Table 1: Expressing the values of data analysis

Table 2: Explanation the data analysis in base of statistical tool

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	**Mild Stress**	61	28.8	28.8	28.8
	Moderate Stress	134	63.2	63.2	92.0
	Severe Stress	15	7.1	7.1	99.1
	No Stress	2	0.9	0.9	100.0
	Total	212	100.0	100.0	

DISCUSSION

The discussion section of the study on stress and stressors among non-medical undergraduate students at the University of Lahore delves into several key points derived from the findings. Firstly, it identifies various stressors experienced by students, including academic pressures like high parental expectations, performance anxiety, and challenges in managing daily tasks.[7] Psychological stressors, such as stage fright, also contribute significantly to students' stress levels. The study reveals a high prevalence of stress among non-medical undergraduate students, primarily originating from academic and psychological concerns.[8] This highlights the need for proactive measures to address stress and its impacts on student well-being and academic performance.[9] The findings underscore the importance of academic institutions in implementing support systems and interventions to assist students in coping with stress effectively. Limitations of the study, such as non-probability convenient sampling and the focus on a single institution, are acknowledged.[10] Future research directions include employing more rigorous sampling techniques, exploring a broader range of stressors, and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions to address stress in academic settings.[11] Overall, the discussion emphasizes the importance of recognizing and addressing stress among non-medical undergraduate students to promote their well-being and academic success.[12] Perceived stress tends to be more pronounced among older students and those in their final year of medical studies. A range of stressors, spanning academic challenges, psychosocial pressures, and environmental factors, contributes to this perception of stress.[13] There's a growing acknowledgment of the necessity to reevaluate assessment methods and examination systems, alongside efforts to enhance campus amenities for recreation and sports, all aimed at easing student stress levels.[14] Establishing counseling services for both students and their parents could prove invaluable in providing support. Moreover, it's essential to recognize the significance of prioritizing students' overall well-being alongside their professional medical education.[15] Offering medical students training in stress management and self-care strategies is crucial. Ultimately, a blend of individualized and institutional interventions is essential for effectively addressing stress among medical students, all while ensuring originality and integrity in the approach.

CONCLUSION

A higher level of stress was reported by the students. The stressors were related to academic and psychological domains, and these stressors influence the students. Hence, students should be prepared how to cope with these stressors in order to excel in life.

LIMITATIONS

While the study on stress and stressors among non-medical undergraduate students at the University of Lahore offers valuable insights, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. The non-probability convenient sampling method and the focus on a single institution may limit the generalizability of findings to a broader student population. The reliance on self-reported data introduces the possibility of social desirability bias, and the cross-sectional design hinders the establishment of causal relationships or the examination of changes over time. The exclusion of certain student groups may further restrict the study's representativeness, and the one-year duration might not capture the nuanced variations in stress levels. Additionally, the study's narrow focus on academic, social, and financial stressors overlooks potential influences from other aspects of students' lives. These limitations underscore the need for caution in generalizing findings and suggest avenues for future research to enhance the depth and breadth of understanding stress among non-medical undergraduate students.

SUGGESTIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

To strengthen future research on stress and stressors among non-medical undergraduate students, employing more rigorous sampling techniques, such as stratified random sampling, can enhance the representativeness of participants. Conducting multi-institutional studies across diverse universities and adopting a longitudinal design would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the evolving nature of stress throughout students' academic journeys. Combining quantitative surveys with qualitative methods, like interviews, could offer deeper insights into the complex factors contributing to stress. Additionally, broadening the scope of stressors examined to encompass personal relationships, health, and extracurricular activities, while also exploring coping mechanisms, will contribute to a more holistic assessment. Regular updates on findings and collaboration with counseling services can further refine interventions tailored to the specific stressors identified. Finally, ensuring ethical considerations and justifying any exclusion criteria will enhance the overall validity and applicability of future research in this area.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST / DISCLOSURE

None.

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