

A STUDY OF PROFESSIONAL STRESS AMONGST SECURITY PROFESSIONALS**Dr. Medha Mathur^{1*}, Dr. Navgeet Mathur², Dr. Smrutiranjana Nayak³, Dr. Abhay Mudey⁴**¹Senior Resident, Department of Community Medicine and Family Medicine, A.I.I.M.S., Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India.²Senior Resident, Department of General Medicine, Dr. S. N. Medical College, Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India.³Assistant Professor, Department of Community Medicine, Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College, Wardha, Maharashtra.⁴Professor, Department of Community Medicine, Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College, Wardha, Maharashtra.**Corresponding Author: Dr. Medha Mathur**

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ABSTRACT

Background: Occupational stress refers to an individual's reaction to a disturbing factor in the environment. It is defined as an adaptive response to an external situation that results in physical, psychological, and/or behavioural deviations for organisational participants. This study was designed to assess the professional stress perceived by security professionals. **Methodology:** Study was conducted for duration of three months at a tertiary care institute of central India including 167 study subjects using pre validated PLSS questionnaire. **Results:** Study participants consisted of 60% males and 40% females. Nearly half of the study subjects (48.5%) were in age range of 30-40 years with moderate degree of professional stress while newly joined subjects were found to be more stressed (PLSS Score 22.19 ± 3.26). Other stressors were also found during the study like climatic conditions and violence. **Conclusion:** Professional stress is a part and parcel of job but creating a stress free environment is beneficial as it can improve productivity of employees. Handling security responsibilities is a challenging job and itself is a stressor so measures to de-stress security professionals should be a priority.

KEYWORDS: Stress, PLSS, Security professionals.**INTRODUCTION**

Professional stress occurs when there is discrepancy between the demands of work place and an individual's ability to carry out the work and complete the demands. Literature survey shows that stress might lead physical, psychological and behavioural problems.^[1]

Occupational stress refers to an individual's reaction to a disturbing factor in the environment. It is defined as an adaptive response to an external situation that results in physical, psychological, and/or behavioural deviations for organisational participants. Occupational stress can manifest itself in both positive and negative ways. Occupational stress is said to be positive when the situation offers an opportunity for one to gain something. *Eustress* is the term used to describe positive stress. *Eustress* is often viewed as a motivator since, in its absence, the individual lacks that 'edge' necessary for peak performance. It is negative when stress is associated with heart disease, alcoholism, drug abuse, marital breakdowns, absenteeism, child abuse, and a host of other social, physical, organisational and emotional problems.^[2] There is an urgent need to understand the dynamics of the professional stress in professionals and its associated health morbidities. Therefore, the present study was designed to assess the severity of stress among the security professionals based on age, gender and work

experience using professional life stress scale questionnaire (David Fontana, 1989) to find out the amount of stress caused by professional work alone.^[3,4]

Aim and objectives

To assess the level and severity of stress amongst security professionals of a tertiary care institute of central India.

METHODOLOGY

Study design and setting: Descriptive type of cross sectional study conducted at a tertiary care institute of Central India. Study Duration: Study was conducted for duration of three months. Study participants: Study was conducted after written consent of 167 participants who were working as security personals at various locations in the institute. Data collection tool: Data was collected using pre validated PLSS questionnaire which includes demographic details and questions related to stress due to occupation and its severity perceived by study participants.^[3] Strategy: After obtaining institutional ethics committee approval the data collection was done. The security personals were approached personally. The questionnaire was translated in local language and was explained in order to avoid any ambiguity. They were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and were requested to give appropriate answers. The filled

questionnaires were collected and each answer was having a score. For each question, score was given as per the Key given for the Professional Life Stress Test. The scores were rated as following:

Score = 15. Stress isn't a problem in your life. This doesn't mean that you have insufficient stress to keep yourself occupied and fulfilled. The scale is only designed to assess undesirable responses to stress.

Score = 16-30. This is a moderate range of stress for a busy professional person. It's nevertheless well worth looking at how it can reasonably be reduced.

Score = 31-45. Stress is clearly a problem, and the need for remedial action is apparent. The longer you work under this level of stress, the harder it often is to do something about it. There is a strong case for looking carefully at your professional life.

Score = 45-60. At these levels, stress is a major problem, and something must be done without delay. You may be nearing the stage of exhaustion in the general adaptability syndrome. The pressure must be eased.

RESULTS

A total of 167 subjects participated in the study. Out of them 101 were males and 66 were females

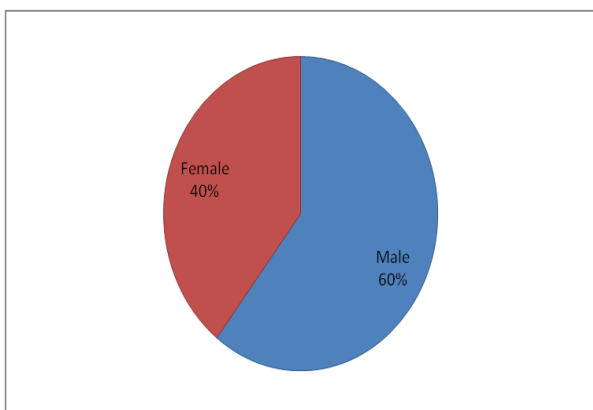


Figure 1: Male and female distribution of study subjects

Based on age distribution, 59 (35.33%) of study participants were between 20-30 years of age, 81(48.50%) were between 31-40 years and 27(16.17%) were between 40 -50 years of age. On assessing the professional life stress scale scores, all participants lied in moderate stress due to profession.

Table 1: Age wise distribution of study subjects along with PLSS scores

Age Group(years)	Frequency (%)	PLSS Score Mean \pm SD
20-30	59 (35.33)	21.29 \pm 3.28
31-40	81(48.50)	22.64 \pm 2.71
41-50	27(16.17)	21.18 \pm 3.06
Total	167(100%)	

Table 2: Based on duration of service, frequency of study subjects along with PLSS scores

Duration of service (years)	Frequency (%)	PLSS Score Mean \pm SD
1-2	77 (46.10)	22.19 \pm 3.26
3-4	69 (41.32)	21.64 \pm 2.98
>4	21 (12.57)	21.89 \pm 2.37

Duration of services revealed that most of the subjects (46.10%) were in current profession for 1-2 years of duration. While 41.32% subjects were employed for 3-4 years and only 12.57% security professionals were in service for more than 4 years of duration. PLSS score under all categories was in moderate range only.

Table 3: Distribution of subjects based on BMI and their PLSS scores

BMI(kg/m ²)	Frequency (%)	PLSS Score Mean \pm SD
18-25	81 (48.50)	21.94 \pm 2.88
>25	86 (51.50)	21.91 \pm 3.18

When the study subjects were classified considering body mass index (BMI), nearly half (48.50%) of the study participants were in range of 18-25 kg/m² and remaining half (51.50%) were having BMI more than 25 kg/m². Although the PLSS score in both the categories was in moderate stress category.

Other stressors assessed by investigators included, violence at work place (61.76%), due to climatic conditions (89.71%) and due to dissatisfying job.

DISCUSSION

Stress is known to have both psychological and physical effects on a person health. So the effect of one factor is reflected on the other factor. Security professionals are considered as vital to the society and the well being of the security guard should be of great concern to the Society. As a part of their job profile security professionals are exposed to risky situations like inadequate resources and work overload; low salary; dealing with suicide scenes; and horrible sights and violence.

Current study focused on the psychological stress due to profession and assessment using a pre-validated scale was done. It was found that security professionals are moderately stressed due to their professional stressors.

Study revealed that duration of job is a reason for stress which is found to be increasing with duration. Similar results were found by another study by Bhat R *et al.*^[4]

Study concludes that professional stress is a part and parcel of every kind of profession, but it is the responsibility of employer along with employee to help in situational adjustments. Counselling and meditation sessions can help in combating the stress of professional origin.

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