



ANALYSIS OF WORKPLACE STRESS AND ITS EFFECT ON JOB PERFORMANCE IN THE HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY

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Abstract:

Stress at the workplace is an invisible challenge threatening the health and performance of healthcare workers worldwide. This study investigates the key causes of stress among healthcare professionals and examines how stress impacts their job performance. Surveying 100 employees from government and private hospitals, the research identifies heavy workload, long working hours, emotional strain, and poor work-life balance as the primary stress factors. The collected data was analyzed using simple statistical tools such as percentages, ranking and cross-tabulation. The study finds that nurses, female staff, younger employees, and those with less experience are more vulnerable to stress. To manage this pressure, many rely on family support, rest, and relaxation practices like yoga. The findings emphasize the urgent need for healthcare organizations to implement effective stress management programs to enhance employee well-being and ensure high-quality patient care.

Key Words: Stress, Healthcare Workers, Job Performance, Emotion, Workload, Work-Life Balance, Nurses, Healthcare Industry, Etc.,

Introduction:

In today's fast-paced and demanding professional environment, workplace stress has emerged as one of the most critical challenges faced by employees across various sectors. Among them, the healthcare industry stands out as particularly vulnerable due to its inherently high-pressure nature. Healthcare professionals-including doctors, nurses, paramedics, technicians, and administrative staff-are frequently exposed to intense workloads, emotional encounters with patients, life-and-death decision-making, and long, irregular working hours. These stressors can accumulate over time, leading to physical exhaustion, emotional fatigue, and psychological distress.

The unique characteristics of the healthcare setting-such as the need for constant vigilance, dealing with critically ill patients, managing emergency situations, and handling patient and family expectations-intensify stress levels more than in many other professions. Moreover, the outbreak of global health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic has further escalated stress among healthcare workers, bringing unprecedented challenges like personal safety concerns, fear of infection, staff shortages, and rapidly changing protocols.

When stress becomes chronic and unmanaged, it not only impacts the personal well-being of healthcare workers but also compromises their professional efficiency. High levels of workplace stress are linked to reduced job satisfaction, increased absenteeism, impaired concentration, medical errors, poor teamwork, and a general decline in job performance. Consequently, the quality of patient care may suffer, jeopardizing both patient safety and organizational reputation.

Given the critical role of healthcare professionals in society, understanding the dynamics of workplace stress and its effects on job performance is essential. This study aims to explore the key sources of stress among healthcare workers, analyze how stress levels influence their performance on the job, and suggest practical measures for managing and mitigating stress. The findings can help healthcare institutions design better work environments, improve staff morale, and ultimately ensure high standards of patient care.

Review of Literature:

Barpanda and Saraswathy (2023) conducted a study on 412 healthcare workers in India during the post-COVID recovery phase. They found that excessive workload was a major contributor to stress, which significantly lowered job performance. The study also highlighted that personal coping mechanisms and personality traits moderated the negative impact of stress on performance outcomes.

Athamneh (2024) examined 600 healthcare professionals in the Jordanian public healthcare sector. The study revealed that poor compensation practices and limited career growth opportunities led to heightened burnout and reduced job satisfaction. Burnout was found to significantly lower performance efficiency, particularly among nursing staff.

Ul Haq and Huo (2024) surveyed 370 hospital employees in Thailand, including nurses, doctors, and support staff. Their findings demonstrated that workplace bullying had a strong impact on emotional exhaustion and psychological distress, especially during the COVID-19 crisis. The compounded effects of stress and fear during the pandemic further led to a noticeable decline in job performance.

Ari (2025) studied 280 healthcare workers in public hospitals in Türkiye and found that stress levels were moderate to high across the board. Nurses reported the highest stress levels, which were negatively correlated with their job performance. The study emphasized that experience level and department (e.g., ICU vs. outpatient) influenced stress intensity.

Alinejad et al. (2023) surveyed 250 Iranian nurses to examine how emotional and moral intelligence mediates the relationship between stress and performance. The results showed that stress had a small direct effect on performance ($\beta = 0.088$), but the presence of high emotional and moral intelligence significantly reduced stress and improved job performance.

Alafoo et al. (2024) studied 540 healthcare professionals in Bahrain, of whom over 90% reported experiencing moderate to high stress. The study found a very strong negative correlation ($r = -0.965$) between occupational stress and job performance, particularly among frontline workers and emergency service staff.

Kooktapeh et al. (2023) reviewed data from 25 studies involving over 10,000 nurses globally, concluded that burnout prevalence surged during the pandemic and required urgent organizational attention. Lastly, Feng and Narayanan (2024) used wearable devices to track stress-related physiological data from 120 medical residents in the U.S. Their study provided innovative insights into real-time stress monitoring and its association with declining performance metrics, including patient care quality and response times.

Statement of the Problem:

Healthcare workers such as doctors, nurses, and support staff often face a lot of pressure in their jobs. They work long hours, handle emergencies, and deal with emotional situations like patient illness and death. These challenges cause high levels of stress.

When healthcare workers are stressed, it can affect how well they do their jobs. They may make more mistakes, feel tired, lose interest in work, or take more sick leave. This not only affects their own health but also the quality of care given to patients.

Even though stress is a big problem in healthcare, many hospitals do not take enough steps to reduce it. There is also not enough clear information on how stress affects different workers or what can be done to manage it.

This study aims to find out what causes stress among healthcare workers, how it affects their job performance, and what steps can help reduce this stress to improve both staff well-being and patient care.

Scope of the Study:

This study focuses on healthcare workers such as doctors, nurses, and hospital staff to understand how workplace stress affects their job performance. It aims to find the main causes of stress and how it differs based on age, gender, job role, and work experience. The study will also look at how stress impacts their work quality, satisfaction, and well-being. The findings will help hospitals take steps to reduce stress and support their staff better. The study is limited to selected hospitals and healthcare centers in a particular area.

Need for the Study:

- To understand the rising stress levels among healthcare workers due to long hours, workload, and emotional pressure.
- To identify the main sources of workplace stress in the healthcare industry.
- To examine how stress affects job performance, including focus, efficiency, and quality of patient care.
- To find out if factors like age, gender, job role, or experience influence how workers handle stress.
- To help healthcare organizations develop better support systems for their employees.

Objectives of the Study:

- To identify the major causes of workplace stress among healthcare workers.
- To find the relationship between stress and job satisfaction in the healthcare sector.

Research Methodology:

This study followed a descriptive research design to examine workplace stress and its effect on job performance among healthcare workers. The purpose of the study was to identify the main causes of stress, understand the coping strategies used by employees, and analyze how stress impacts their job performance. The data was collected from 100 respondents working in both government and private healthcare institutions. The respondents included doctors, nurses, technicians, pharmacists, and administrative staff. A structured questionnaire was used as the main tool for data collection. It contained questions related to personal details (age, gender, marital status, etc.), causes of stress, coping methods, and performance at work. A convenient sampling method was used to select the participants. The survey was conducted in a respectful and confidential manner, and participants were informed about the purpose of the study. The collected data was analyzed using simple statistical tools such as percentages, ranking and cross-tabulation. These tools helped in identifying patterns and drawing meaningful interpretations about the level of stress, its causes, and its effect on job performance. This research aims to provide useful suggestions for healthcare institutions to reduce stress and improve employee well-being and productivity.

Limitations of the Study:

- The study included only 100 healthcare workers, so results may not represent everyone.
- The participants were chosen based on convenience, which may affect the accuracy of the results.
- Information was collected through questionnaires, so answers may not always be fully honest.
- The study was done in selected hospitals and may not apply to all healthcare places.
- Other factors affecting stress, like personal life or hospital rules, were not studied.
- The study looked at one time only, so it does not show changes over time.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	Below 25	18	18%
	26-35	42	42%
	36-45	25	25%
	46-55	10	10%
	Above 55	5	5%
Gender	Male	38	38%
	Female	62	62%
Marital Status	Single	45	45%

	Married	55	55%
Educational Qualification	Diploma	12	12%
	UG	40	40%
	PG	38	38%
	M.Phil./Ph.D.	10	10%
	Doctor	20	20%
Job Role	Nurse	50	50%
	Technician	10	10%
	Pharmacist	10	10%
	Administrative Staff	10	10%
	< 1 Year	10	10%
Work Experience	1-5 Years	35	35%
	6-10 Years	30	30%
	Above 10 Years	25	25%
	Government Hospital	60	60%
Type of Institution	Private Hospital	30	30%
	Clinic	5	5%
	Community Health Center	5	5%
	Department	Emergency	20
ICU		15	15%
OPD		25	25%
General Ward		20	20%
Laboratory/Pharmacy/Admin		20	20%
Monthly Income	Below ₹20,000	25	25%
	₹20,001-₹40,000	40	40%
	₹40,001-₹60,000	20	20%
	Above ₹60,000	15	15%
Work Shift Type	Day Shift	45	45%
	Night Shift	25	25%
	Rotational Shift	30	30%

The demographic profile of the 100 respondents shows that the majority (42%) belong to the age group of 26-35 years, followed by 25% in the 36-45 age group. This indicates that most healthcare workers in the study are young to middle-aged adults. In terms of gender, 62% are female and 38% are male, showing that females form the majority, which is common in the healthcare sector, especially in nursing.

Regarding marital status, 55% of the respondents are married, while 45% are single. This helps understand how personal responsibilities might relate to stress levels. When it comes to education, most respondents hold undergraduate (40%) and postgraduate (38%) degrees, indicating a well-qualified workforce.

Job roles, nurses make up the largest group at 50%, followed by doctors at 20%, while the rest are technicians, pharmacists, or administrative staff. In terms of work experience, 35% have 1-5 years of experience, and 30% have 6-10 years, showing that the sample includes fairly experienced individuals.

Most respondents (60%) work in government hospitals, followed by 30% in private hospitals, and the rest in clinics or health centers. The highest number of workers are from OPD (25%) and emergency (20%) departments, which are often high-stress areas. In terms of income, 40% earn between ₹20,001-₹40,000 and 25% earn below ₹20,000, indicating that most fall within the low to middle-income group. Regarding work shifts, 45% work day shifts, while 30% have rotational shifts and 25% work night shifts, which can influence both stress and performance.

Table 2: Gender-wise Cross Tabulation of Causes of Workplace Stress among Healthcare Workers

Cause of Stress	Male (n=38)	Female (n=62)	Total
Heavy workload	25 (65.8%)	50 (80.6%)	75 (75.0%)
Long working hours	20 (52.6%)	40 (64.5%)	60 (60.0%)
Lack of staff support	18 (47.4%)	35 (56.5%)	53 (53.0%)
Emotional stress from patient care	15 (39.5%)	42 (67.7%)	57 (57.0%)
Poor work-life balance	22 (57.9%)	38 (61.3%)	60 (60.0%)

The gender-wise cross-tabulation indicates that female healthcare workers report higher stress levels in all categories compared to males. A significant number of females (80.6%) experience heavy workload, followed by emotional stress from patient care (67.7%) and long working hours (64.5%). Males also report stress but to a lesser extent. This trend highlights that female professionals, often overrepresented in frontline roles like nursing, face more stress, possibly due to multitasking at work and home.

Table 2: Age-wise Cross Tabulation of Causes of Workplace Stress among Healthcare Workers

Cause of Stress	<25 (n=18)	26-35 (n=42)	36-45 (n=25)	46-55 (n=10)	>55 (n=5)	Total
Heavy workload	12	35	18	7	3	75
Long working hours	10	28	15	5	2	60
Lack of staff support	9	24	12	5	3	53
Emotional stress from patient care	12	28	12	3	2	57

Poor work-life balance	10	26	14	6	4	60
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Age-wise data shows that respondents in the 26-35 age group experience the highest levels of workplace stress across all factors, especially heavy workload (35 out of 42) and long working hours (28 out of 42). This group may be handling demanding roles while balancing personal responsibilities. The 36-45 group follows closely behind. Younger respondents (<25) also show notable stress from emotional patient care. Older age groups (46-55 and above 55) report lower stress, likely due to experience, role stability, or adaptation over time.

Table 3: Marital Status-wise Cross Tabulation of Causes of Workplace Stress among Healthcare Workers

Cause of Stress	Single (n=45)	Married (n=55)	Total
Heavy workload	30 (66.7%)	45 (81.8%)	75
Long working hours	28 (62.2%)	32 (58.2%)	60
Lack of staff support	22 (48.9%)	31 (56.4%)	53
Emotional stress from patient care	20 (44.4%)	37 (67.3%)	57
Poor work-life balance	26 (57.8%)	34 (61.8%)	60

In the marital status cross-tabulation, married respondents report higher workplace stress compared to singles, especially with heavy workload (81.8%), emotional stress (67.3%), and poor work-life balance (61.8%). This may be due to added family responsibilities, less personal time, or the pressure to maintain stability. Single respondents still report considerable stress, especially in workload and long hours, but slightly less than their married counterparts.

Table 4: Experience-wise Cross Tabulation of Causes of Workplace Stress among Healthcare Workers

Cause of Stress	<1 yr (n=10)	1-5 yrs (n=35)	6-10 yrs (n=30)	>10 yrs (n=25)	Total
Heavy workload	7	28	22	18	75
Long working hours	6	20	18	16	60
Lack of staff support	5	17	16	15	53
Emotional stress from patient care	7	20	16	14	57
Poor work-life balance	6	18	20	16	60

The data shows that those with 1-5 years of experience are the most affected by workplace stress. This group reported the highest figures for heavy workload (28), emotional stress (20), and poor work-life balance (18). Newer employees (<1 year) also show notable stress, likely due to adjustment issues and lack of coping strategies. Those with more than 10 years of experience report lower stress levels, possibly due to greater confidence, seniority, and better stress management practices.

Table 5: Job-wise Cross Tabulation of Causes of Workplace Stress among Healthcare Workers

Cause of Stress	Doctor (n=20)	Nurse (n=50)	Technician (n=10)	Pharmacist (n=10)	Admin (n=10)	Total
Heavy workload	18	40	7	5	5	75
Long working hours	16	28	5	5	6	60
Lack of staff support	12	26	4	5	6	53
Emotional stress from patient care	15	30	4	4	4	57
Poor work-life balance	14	28	6	6	6	60

Among different job roles, nurses experience the highest stress in all categories. 40 out of 50 nurses reported stress due to heavy workload, while 30 felt emotional stress from patient care. This is expected, as nurses are the primary caregivers and work closely with patients under intense conditions. Doctors also show high stress, especially from workload and long working hours. Other roles like technicians, pharmacists, and admin staff report comparatively lower stress, possibly due to more defined or supportive responsibilities.

Table 6: Ranking of Strategies Used by Healthcare Workers

Strategy	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Rank
Talking with family or friends	82	82%	1
Taking rest or sleep	75	75%	2
Practicing yoga or meditation	60	60%	3
Engaging in hobbies	52	52%	4
Physical exercise or walking	48	48%	5
Seeking help from colleagues	43	43%	6
Consulting a counselor or doctor	30	30%	7
Using social media or entertainment	25	25%	8

The table shows that most healthcare workers manage workplace stress by talking with family or friends, which is the most preferred strategy. Taking rest or sleep is also a popular method to relax after work. Many respondents use yoga, meditation, and hobbies to calm themselves and reduce tension. Some adopt physical exercise and seek support from colleagues when stressed. Only a few approach counselors or doctors, and even fewer use social media or entertainment as a coping method. This suggests that personal and emotional support systems are more commonly used than professional help.

Suggestions for the Study:

- Healthcare institutions should organize regular stress management workshops and wellness programs for staff.
- Proper work scheduling and shift rotation should be ensured to avoid excessive workload and burnout.
- Hospitals should provide access to in-house counselors or psychologists for emotional support.
- Management should promote a friendly and supportive work environment where staff can freely discuss their concerns.
- Relaxation techniques such as yoga, meditation, and breathing exercises can be introduced during breaks or after shifts.
- Regular feedback sessions between staff and supervisors can help in identifying stress-related issues early.

Conclusion:

Workplace stress is a serious concern in the healthcare industry and needs proper attention to protect the health and performance of employees. This study shows that healthcare workers experience stress mainly due to heavy workload, long working hours, emotional pressure, and poor work-life balance. Stress levels are higher among nurses, women, younger staff, and those with less experience. It also affects job performance and personal well-being. Many workers try to cope by talking to family, resting, and practicing relaxation techniques. Therefore, hospitals should take steps to reduce stress and support their staff for better performance and mental health.

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