

PP-10-PHS

PROPORTION AND FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH STRESS AMONG UNDERGRADUATES OF SELECTED GOVERNMENT UNIVERSITIES IN THE COLOMBO DISTRICT

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Background: Studies have demonstrated that undergraduates undergo heightened stress levels due to various contributory factors. The study sought to evaluate stress prevalence and associated factors, facilitating university authorities to create a stress-reducing environment.

Methods: Conducted as a descriptive cross-sectional study, this research focused on 311 undergraduate participants. Utilizing a self-administered questionnaire, data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS version 23.

Results: The study analyzed stress among 311 undergraduates from government universities in the Colombo district. The age group 20-23 exhibited 57.7% stress prevalence, while 48% of those aged 24-27 reported stress. Stress was slightly higher among males (94.9%) compared to females (89.7%). Financial strain affected 45.7%, distance from permanent residence impacted 26.7%, and 76.2% were stressed due to residing away from home. Ethnic-wise, stress was highest among Sinhalese (83%), followed by Tamils (7.1%) and Muslims (1.9%). Religion-wise, Buddhists reported 68.2% stress, Christians 14.1%, Hindus 7.1%, and Muslims 2.6%. Unhealthy lifestyles contributed significantly, with stress linked to smoking (4.5%), betel chewing (0.6%), alcohol use (10.6%), and physical inactivity (51.8%). Non-communicable diseases were associated with 13.2% stress prevalence. Lack of social support impacted 86.5%, while loneliness and relationship issues accounted for 48.2%. Among romantic relationships, 59.8% of unmarried individuals were stressed compared to 32.2% in relationships.

Conclusions and recommendations: The study found no significant correlations between age and sex, but stress was influenced by financial strain, residential conditions, lifestyle choices, and cultural factors. Discrimination, social isolation, and relationship problems were significant stressors, while academic stressors highlighted the complexity of stress among undergraduates. Future research should expand samples, adopt longitudinal designs, standardize assessments, explore cultural nuances, and investigate diverse stress-related factors comprehensively.

Keywords: Undergraduate Stress, Colombo Universities, Academic Stress Factors, Factors associated with stress