



A descriptive study to assess the level of stress among postnatal mothers at coimbatore medical college hospital, coimbatore.

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ABSTRACT

Postnatal stress is a significant psychological concern that affects the physical and emotional well-being of mothers and their infants. Understanding its prevalence and associated factors is essential for planning effective interventions to promote maternal mental health. Objectives: To assess the level of stress among postnatal mothers using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) and to describe the relationship between demographic and obstetrical variables with stress levels. Methods: A quantitative research approach with a descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The research was conducted at Coimbatore Medical College Hospital, Coimbatore. The study population comprised postnatal mothers who had delivered either vaginally or by lower segment caesarean section (LSCS). A non-probability purposive sampling technique was used to select 30 postnatal mothers based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire on demographic and obstetrical variables and the standardized Perceived Stress Scale (PSS). Results: Among the 30 postnatal mothers, the majority (70%) were aged between 21–25 years, 70% were Hindus, 44% had completed secondary education, and 60% were unemployed. Regarding obstetrical variables, 77% were multigravida, 67% had normal vaginal delivery, and 83% reported their child as healthy. The assessment of stress revealed that 67% of the postnatal mothers experienced moderate stress, while 33% experienced high stress. No participants reported low stress levels. Conclusion: The findings of the study indicate that all postnatal mothers experienced some level of stress, highlighting the need for continuous psychological assessment and supportive interventions during the postnatal period. The Perceived Stress Scale was found to be an effective tool for assessing stress among postnatal mothers.

KEYWORDS: Postnatal mothers, perceived stress scale, postnatal stress, descriptive study, psychological well-being, maternal health.

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INTRODUCTION

Pregnancy and childbirth are the special events in women's life. Motherhood is one of life's blessings. It is a lifelong event that forever change women into a mother. Mother heightens the emotions we feel and explodes the limits of what we think is possible in life. [Som and Sripura, 2017]. The physiological transition from being pregnant women to a mother means, an enormous change in each women's life both physically and psychologically. [Cormick, 2001]

Postpartum stress is defined as a constraints force produced by postpartum stress. These are described as conditions of change demand structural constraints that are occurring or existing within 6 weeks of delivery. Primi mothers experience highest levels of stress, compared with the multiparous ones.

In India incidence, mild stress for postnatal mothers was ranged from 30-40% of new mothers experience mild stress, characterized by anxiety, worry, and mood swings. Moderate stress: 20 30% of new mothers experience moderate stress, characterized by difficulty sleeping, changes in appetite, and irritability. Severe stress: 10-20% of new mothers experience severe stress, characterized by intense anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A descriptive study to assess the level of stress among postnatal mothers at Coimbatore medical college hospital, Coimbatore.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the level of stress among postnatal mothers.
2. To find out the association between level of stress among postnatal mothers with selected

demographic variables and obstetrical variables.

HYPOTHESES

H0: There is no significant difference in the level of stress among post-natal mothers.

H1: There is a significant difference between in the level of stress among postnatal mothers.

METHODOLOGY

Research approach: Quantitative research approach was adopted for this study

Research Design: Descriptive research design.

Research setting: Coimbatore medical college hospital, Coimbatore

Population: Postnatal mothers (both vaginal and LSCS delivery)

Sampling technique: Non probability Purposive sampling technique was adopted.

Sample size: 30 postnatal mothers were selected for this study.

Tools: Structured Questionnaire method and Perceived stress scale (PSS)

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

SECTION I: Distribution of Demographic Variables of Postnatal Mothers

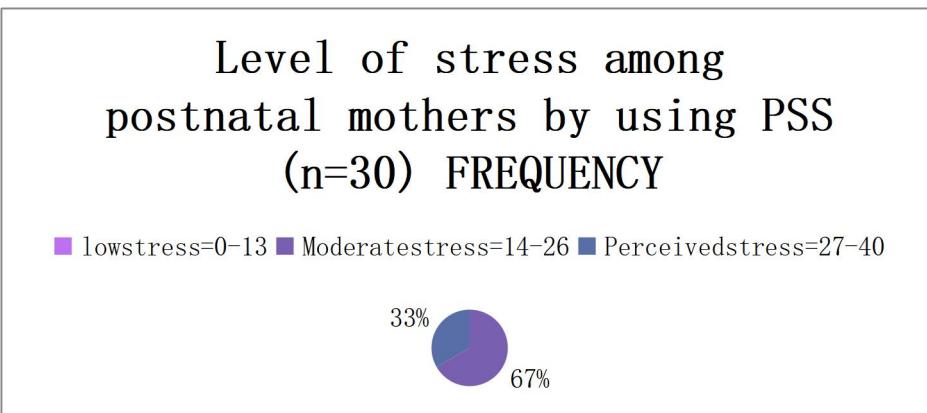
SLN O	Demographic variables	NO OF POSTNATAL MOTHERS (n=30)	
		FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
1	AGE IN YEARS		
	15-20	1	3%
	21-25	21	70%
	26-30	7	24%
2	RELIGION		
	Hindu	21	70%
	Christian	4	16%
	Muslim	5	14%
3	EDUCATION		
	Primary	4	13%
	Secondary	13	44%
	Higher secondary	4	13%
	Diploma	1	3%
4	OCCUPATION		
	Graduate	8	27%
	Employed	12	40%
	Unemployed	18	60%

SECTION II: Distribution of Obstetrical Variables of Postnatal Mothers

SLN O	Obstetrical Variables	NO OF POSTNATALMOTHERS (n=30)	
		FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
1	Gravida		
	Primi	7	23%
	Multi	23	77%
2	No of live births		
	one	8	27%
	two	15	50%
	morethan two	7	23%
3	Types of delivery		
	Normal	20	67%

	LSCS	10	33%
4	Child Sex		
	male	20	67%
	female	10	33%
5	Health status		
	Healthy	25	83%
	Unhealthy	5	17%

Section-III: Assess the level of stress among postnatal mothers using perceived stress scale.



Section-V: Association between level of stress among postnatal mothers using Chi square

S. No.	Demographic /Obstetrical Variable	Knowledge Level	χ^2 Value	P Value	Inference
1	Age (in years)	15–20 yrs = 0,1,0 21–25 yrs = 0,9,13 26–30 yrs = 0,1,6 31–35 yrs = 0,0,1	3.45	0.05	NS
2	Religion	Hindu = 0,11,10 Christian = 0,1,3 Muslim = 0,0,5	5.03	0.05	NS
3	Education	Primary = 0,4,0 Secondary = 0,7,6 Higher secondary = 0,0,4 Diploma = 0,0,1 Graduate = 0,1,7	18.47	0.05	NS
4	Occupation	Employed = 0,10,2 Unemployed = 0,2,16	15.63	0.05	NS
5	Gravida	Primi = 0,7,0 Multi = 0,5,18	13.67	0.05	NS
6	Complications during pregnancy	Yes = 0,4,0 No = 0,9,17	6.09	0.05	NS
7	Type of delivery	Normal = 0,11,9 LSCS = 0,1,9	5.63	0.05	NS
8	Number of children	One = 0,8,0 Two = 0,4,11 More than two = 0,0,7	9.70	0.05	NS
9	Sex of child	Male = 0,11,11 Female = 0,1,7	3.43	0.05	NS
10	Child health status	Healthy = 0,14,11 Unhealthy = 0,0,5	3.20	0.05	NS

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Findings Related to Demographic Variables

- Age: The majority of participants, 21 (70%), were in the age group of 21–25 years, while the least, 1 (3%), belonged to the age group of 31–45 years.
- Religion: Most of the participants were Hindus (21; 70%), followed by Christians (4; 14%), and the remaining belonged to other religions.
- Educational Status: The highest proportion of mothers, 13 (44%), had completed secondary education, while the lowest, 1 (3%), had obtained a diploma.
- Occupation: A majority, 18 (60%), were unemployed, whereas 12 (40%) were employed.

Findings Related to Obstetrical Variables

- Gravida: The majority of mothers, 23 (77%), were multigravida, while 7 (23%) were primigravida.
- Number of Live Births: Half of the respondents, 15 (50%), had two live births, 8 (27%) had one, and 7 (23%) had more than two.
- Type of Delivery: Most of the participants, 20 (67%), had undergone normal vaginal delivery, whereas 10 (33%) had delivered by lower segment cesarean section (LSCS).
- Sex of the Child: 20 (67%) of the newborns were male, and 10 (33%) were female.
- Child Health Status: A majority, 25 (83%), reported their child as healthy, while 5 (17%) reported unhealthy children

Findings Related to Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)

The perceived stress among postnatal mothers was assessed using the standardized Perceived Stress Scale. The findings revealed that:

- Moderate stress levels (PSS score 14–26) were observed among 20 mothers (67%).
- High stress levels (PSS score 27–40) were noted in 10 mothers (33%).

Association between level of stress among postnatal mothers using Chi-square

The analysis revealed no statistically significant association ($P > 0.05$) between the knowledge level of postnatal mothers and any of the selected demographic variables such as age, religion, education, occupation, gravida, complications during pregnancy, type of delivery, number of children, sex of the child, or child health status. Although the differences were not statistically significant, higher knowledge scores were observed among mothers aged 21–25 years, unemployed women, and multigravida mothers

CONCLUSION

The level of stress experienced by postnatal mothers is significant and can severely impact both the mother's and the child's health. Recognizing the symptoms early and providing timely interventions—ranging from therapy to medical treatment—are critical in reducing the negative effects of postnatal stress. A supportive environment, both emotionally and physically, plays a key role in mitigating the stress experienced by mothers. As awareness of postnatal stress continues to grow, the availability of more resources and strategies to support new mothers can help improve overall outcomes for families. The study results revealed that the Perceived Stress Scale is an effective tool for assessing the level of stress among postnatal mothers.

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