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## Perception of stress and assessment of coping strategies among remote workers

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### Abstract

**Aim:** The current investigation was to examine the intensity of stress experienced by the remote workers.

**Methods:** A questionnaire was developed which includes demographic profile sheet, work profile sheet and perceived stress scale. These tools were used to gather information from the respondents. Google forms links of the questionnaire were mailed to 500 respondents and of which 198 people have responded. This paper focused on the intensity of stress due to prolonged isolation, working from home and not meeting colleagues for long time.

**Result:** The stress was common among all the ages of respondents but it was little more in the female and also more in the students as compared to other professions.

**Conclusion:** The recent pandemic has put more stress on people regarding work from home, social isolation, social distancing etc. It has impacted people's mental and physical well-being.

**Keywords:** Social distancing, remote workers, occupational stress, well being

### 1. Introduction

Stress is the physical and mental reaction of various conditions that include some particular sort of change. Due to seriousness about work and career, people get stressed out and upset which impact their life <sup>[1]</sup>. Stress have created huge issues because of dynamic social factor and changing requirements of ways of life. Stress is man's versatile response to an outward circumstance which would prompt physical, mental and social changes. Despite the fact that pressure kills synapses, not all anxieties are damaging in nature. Proper measure of pressure can really trigger enthusiasm for work, tap dormant capacities and even light motivations. Normal pressure responses incorporate strain, fractiousness, powerlessness to focus, and an assortment of actual side effects that incorporate migraine and fast heartbeat. Stress is a condition or feeling experienced when an individual have more presser than social assets.  $S = P > R$  i.e., stress happens when the pressing factor is more noteworthy than the assets. Stress is our body's method of reacting to any sort of interest. At a point when an individual feel focused by something going on around them, their bodies respond by releasing hormones into the blood which gives more energy and strength, which can be something worth being good for if their pressure is brought about by actual threat. Be that as it may, this can likewise be something awful, if their pressure is in light of something passionate and there is no source for this additional energy and strength <sup>[2]</sup>. Stress can be capable from four essential sources – the climate, social stressors, physiological and considerations. Stress is unpreventable part of current lifestyle, work place is turning into an unpredictable pressure production line for most representatives and it is properly called as the Age of anxiety <sup>[3]</sup>. The definitions of stress given by some psychologist are coated as “Stress is the body's nonspecific response to a demand placed on it”- Hans Selye, “Stress as a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize” - Richard S. Lazarus, “Nervous tension that results from internal conflicts from a wide range of external situations”- D'Souza <sup>[4]</sup>.

#### 1.1 Occupational Stress

The work related stress has observable utilitarian, enthusiastic and have impact on execution of representatives across the globe, regardless of the association and sort of work. Despite the fact that with the progression of science and innovation and monetary development, most of the

functioning local area is encountering moderate to significant level of work related pressure like social changes, physiological problems, mental changes of a person, and diminished execution specifically. The commitments of the specialists throughout the previous twenty years on pressure was perceived as significant due to the persistent social changes, changes in way of life and social climate of the functioning social orders, and is upsetting balance between happily working and serious activities, representative execution, and thusly, influence association's usefulness. Stress is people adjustment of nature or response to the conditions that are outside and cause social, mental, and actual changes. The work pressure is an aftereffect of uncontrolled physical and requests on a human being [5]. Hence the present study is taken up to assess the stress across gender and professions.

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1 Selection of subjects

Google forms link was mailed to 500 respondents, out of which 198 respondents have replied. The respondents were divided into gender and profession. The respondents were separated based on student, teacher and IT Professional.

### 2.2 Data collection

The survey was conducted during 15 March – 30 April in 2021. General information sheet was developed which collected data on age, gender, profession, marital status and education level. Work profile was developed to procure information about within which no. of working hours, working shift, job experience, online class hrs etc. were included. Perceived Stress Scale by Sheldon Cohen was used for the estimation of stress. Score ranged from 0(Never), 1(Almost Never), 2(Sometimes), 3(Fairly often) and 4(Very often).

### 2.3 Statistical analysis

The data was analyzed with the help of the IBM SPSS Statistics Version 20. The degree of stress and stress coping strategies were determined with the help of frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and significance was tested using Pearson's Chi square test.

## 3. Results and Discussion

Results of the study identified that remote working have increased stress in people.

**Table 1:** Distribution of respondents according to gender

Gender	Frequency (N=198)	Percentage (%)
Male	81	40.9
Female	117	59.1
Total	198	100.0

Results in the above table describe the distribution of respondents on the basis of their gender. It shows that 40.9% of the respondents were male and 59.1% of the respondents were female. This may be that females may not have bonded with the office colleagues and working from home due to responsibilities at home. Females have stress of work for both the places.

**Table 2:** Distribution of respondents according to professional status

Professional Status	Frequency (N=198)	Percentage (%)
Student	127	64.1
Teacher	20	10.1
IT Professional	51	25.8
Total	198	100.0

Results in the above table describe the distribution of respondents on the basis of their professional status. It shows that 64.1% of the respondents were students, 10.1% of the respondents were teachers and 25.8% of the respondents were IT Professional.

**Table 3:** Distribution of professionals according to their number of working hours

Age of the respondents	0-4 hrs.	4-8 hrs.	8-12 hrs.	12 hrs and above
18-24	1(8.3)	4(33.3)	6(50.0)	1(8.3)
25-34	1(5.3)	6(31.6)	12(63.2)	0(0)
35-44	1(5.6)	4(22.2)	12(66.7)	1(5.6)
45- 54	1(7.7)	9(27.3)	3(23.1)	0(0)
54 and above	0(0)	10(71.4)	4(28.6)	0(0)

As it is evident from the table that majority of people of young age group people (18-24, 25-34 and 35-44) work for 8 to 12 hrs as compared to the older age (45-54, 54 and above) who work for 4 to 8 hours online. The reason may be that young workers have high unemployment and underemployment rates compared with older workers.

**Table 4:** Distribution of respondents according to number of hours online class attended

Age of the respondents	0-2 hrs.	2-4 hrs.	4-6 hrs.	6 hrs. and above
18-24	22(23.7)	37(39.8)	26(28)	8(8.6)
25- 34	11(37.9)	9(31.0)	5(17.2)	4(13.8)

From the table above it is seen that greater part (39.8%) of students involved for 2-4 hours of online classes whereas 37.9% are involved for only 2 hours of class. The justification this might be that students for the age group 18-24 years students might have planned classes and furthermore after classes they might be online to concentrate from notes or other online references while for the age group of 25-34 that they might be associated with classes for less time and might be doing offline studies.

**Table 5:** Assessment of perception of stress across gender

Perception of stress	Male	Female
Low	27(33.3)	30(25.6)
Moderate	53(65.4)	69(59.0)
High	1(1.2)	18(15.4)

Chi-Square = 11.295\*\*; P value= .004

(Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage)

It can be noted from the table above that significant differences were observed across gender with the  $X^2$  value of 11.295. It is evident from the data that majority of respondents (65.4%) males have expressed high stress, followed by 15.4% females who expressed moderate stress. The stress is distributed more in females and this may be due to the pressure of their office work as well as the pressure of the household work. Females need to attend the office meetings, work at home (household works), and also sometimes need to go the market for the household stuffs and play with the kids.

**Table 6:** Assessment of perception of stress across profession

Perception of stress	Student	Teacher	IT Professional
Low	39(30.7)	7(35.0)	11(21.6)
Moderate	72(56.7)	12(60)	38(74.5)
High	16(12.6)	1(5.0)	2(3.9)

Chi-Square = 6.583; P value= .160

(Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage)

It is evident from the data in the table above that non-significant differences were observed across profession with the  $X^2$  value of 6.583. It is evident from the data that majority of (74.5%) IT Professionals have expressed moderate stress, followed by 56.7% students who expressed moderate stress. The stress is more distributed in students and the reason of this stress may be that students need to complete their assignments, study through online notes or materials, to find out about more career prospects etc. Other researchers have shown that when the level of education increases then there is an automatic increase in stress takes place but it happens for a specific period of time when students have academic pressure.

#### 4. Conclusion

It was seen that all the pressure & stress is an impact of working style, number of working hours, level of work and many other whereas intensity of stress somewhat differ with their professions. We have also observed women will have more stress because of their dual roles working and taking the responsibility of the family at home and the role conflict. Proper strategies need to be developed considering working on flexible hours, interpersonal relationship and supervision and participation of the employees in the stress management may be helpful to cope the stressors. An inside and out study will be extremely useful to moderate the reasons for work related pressure, mental prosperity, and pandemic wellbeing risks.

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