

Family Stress among Persons with Neurotic Disorders

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ABSTRACT


Introduction: Family stress is a common phenomenon in our present social system. Sometimes it has been managed by the family members through their own dynamic life style but failing to cope up with their stress often resulted into neurotic disorders. **Methodology:** The present study is a descriptive, cross-sectional study. Using random sampling method 92 samples were taken out of the total 871 persons with neurotic disorders attained the outpatient department (OPD) of Psychiatric Centre, Jaipur, India in one year. The required information was gathered through an interview schedule design for study. **Result:** On the analysis of the data, it was found that more than one-third respondents having the conflict of various degrees with spouse; near one-fourth of the sample had inter-personal conflict with parental family of spouse (in-laws); one-fifth had conflict with other persons with his/her sibling and finally one-eighth has conflict with their own parents. The cause of conflict with their family members was mainly due to environmental and economic tension in the nature of inter-personal relationships which creates stress in the family relationship. The impact of stress on body function was sleep disturbances in thirty per cent cases. **Conclusion:** In the present study sample most of them were having interpersonal conflict in the family. The basic cause of the conflict was found to be due to environmental and economic tensions which affected the body function in the forms of sleep disturbance in thirty per cent cases.

Keywords: Family stress, neurotic disorders

Introduction : Family Stress can be defined as any stressor that concerns one or more members of the family (or the whole system) at a defined time, which impacts the emotional connection between family members, their mood, well being, as well as the maintenance of the family relationship.^[1] It is inevitable in life and it is liable to increase with complexities, aspirations and uncertainties, associated with socioeconomic, political and cultural upheavals. According to a very early but exhaustive definition,

posited stress is explained as “a biological term which refers to the consequences of the failure of a human or animal body to respond appropriately to emotional or physical threats to the organism, whether actual or imagined.”^[2] Stress can also be defined as a process in which when environmental demands lead to strain in organism's adaptive capacity, it results in both psychological as well as biological changes that could place the organism at risk for illness.^[3] Stress occurs for an individual when the pressure exceeds his or her

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perceived ability to cope.^[4] According to strain theory (Anomie) of the social sources of these strains also producing pressure in the discrepancy between culture goals. The social means to achieve these goals resulted in causing stress.^[5] Furthermore, stress has an adverse effect on under pressure or other types of demand placed on them.^[6] According to Hans Selye who introduced the concept of stress in the life sciences. Stress occurs when there are demands on the person, which tax or exceed his resources.^[7] Stress has a physiological and psychological response to a condition that threatens or challenges a person and requires some form of adaptation or adjustment

Further Hans Selye was also the first scholar to explain the stress phenomenon, namely generally adaptation syndrome (GAS). One-eighth is a comprehensive model explaining stress phenomenon and is widely used. The three stages of GAS are:

1. the initial alarm stage in which resistance is lowered and defensive mechanism becomes active;
2. the stage of resistance, characterized by intense physiological efforts to either resist or adapt to the stressors and resistance increases to levels above normal;
3. finally the stage of exhaustion in which adaptation energy is exhausted. Signs of alarm reaction reappear and the resistance level begins to decline irreversibly.^[8]

In the Indian context, "klesa" (affliction) and "Dhukha" (pain, misery or suffering) are two Sanskrit words which approximate stress. Bhagwat Gita explains that "kama or trisna" (desire) is the root of the experience of stress as stress is due to obstacles in fulfilment of desires.^[9] According to Samkhya-Yoga system "avidya" is the basic non-cognitive element, which leads to phenomenological stress as it leads to "asmita" (self-appraisal, "raga" (object appraisal, "devesha" (threat appraisal) and "abhinivesa" (coping orientation). Stress can be produced by faulty evaluation of either or all of these.^[10] Stress refers to the specific response of the body to any demand made upon it. It has many faceted effects and occurs in response to events that disrupt or disturb our physical and psychological functioning. Stress is an

important factor that influences the physical and mental health of an individual; it determines our capacity and adversely affects our health system.^[11] It is almost impossible to live without some stress though everyone wants to live without stress. We could say in other words that stress is essential in our living, just as hunger and thirst are. Without the experience of stress, we would not be prepared to avoid or overcome situations harmful to ourselves and our family.^[12] If stress is more than a tolerable level then people lose self-control and sometimes indulge in destructive behaviours e.g. drinking alcohol and taking drugs. But everybody does not want to do the same thing. They try to engage in some constructive work e.g. starting to play sports, watching the television or some recreational activity. Through this process, they could dissolve their stress if, it is the daily routine life. But sometimes it cannot be controlled by the person then it may come harmful then they would not have a harmonious relationship in the family as well as society, besides being unable to enjoy their life. Sometimes they cannot be generated adaptability with the family members, failing which relationships suffer and lead to family conflict and affects adaptability, which results stress and ultimately might cause neurotic disorder^[13]. It differs from person to person and also in people with different personality traits. It also depends on the tolerance level of the person, as well as the quality of his relationship and his emotional intelligence.

Even our technological growth has increased since past hundred years resulting in a new culture which has been adopted by the new generation and people who can afford it. However, they could produce the stress if, they are having a self-productive reaction when we are confronted by threats to our safety, well being, happiness and self-esteem threats like illness, accidents, violence, financial trouble, trouble on the job, trouble in family relations etc. Sometimes constant stress can cause the physical diseases like peptic ulcer, bronchial asthma, heart-attack, blood pressure, migraine and anxiety neurosis etc.^[14] This need to examine the causes within the family, which can cause stress, which leads to neurotic disorders. Hence, the study was undertaken with the following objectives.

Objectives of the study

1. To find out the causes of stress in the family of the neurotic disorders
2. To study the nature of stress due to inter personal conflict in the family
3. To know the impact of stress on physically and mentally functions

METHODOLOGY

The present study is a descriptive, cross-sectional study. Samples were taken from outpatients department of Psychiatric Centre, Jaipur, India. During the period of

one year (2014) the total number of cases registered was 871. Out of these, 92 cases were drawn on the basis of random sample method which was 10.4 % of the total population details presented in Table 1. Male and female samples were 41.3 and 58.7 percent respectively. The study samples are persons suffering from various types of neurotic disorders viz: anxiety, depression, conversion disorder, phobia and obsessive compulsive disorder after being diagnosed by a Psychiatrist as per International Classification of Disease (ICD-10).^[15] The required information was gathered through an interview schedule designed for the present study with the consent of the respondents.

Table- 1 Sample Size of the Study

Types of Neurotic disorders	Total number of cases			Total Sample drawn			Percentage of Sample Drown		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Depression (F -32)	160	298	458	17	31	48	10.6	10.4	10.4
Anxiety neurosis (F -41)	171	115	286	18	12	30	10.5	10.4	10.4
Dissociative & conversion disorders (F-44)	21	96	124	3	10	14	10.7	10.4	10.4
Phobia (F -40)	2	x	2	x	x	x	x	x	x
Obsession compulsivedisorder (F-42)	1	x	1	x	x	x	x	x	x
Total Cases	362	509	871	38	54	92	10.5	10.4	10.7

**Table - 2
Causes of Stress in the Family**

Causes of Stress in the Family	f (N= 92)	%
Parent’s loss in childhood	11	12.1
Members suffering from mental illness	05	05.5
Chronic illness of spouse	17	18.8
Loving kin expired	20	22.1
No children	09	09.7
No son	03	03.3
Too many children	05	05.5

RESULTS

The result of this study shows that the causes of stress factor were found in more than two third of the sample in which the loving kin expired was the main factor of stress in the family of a person with neurotic disorders as presented in table - 2.

The data regarding the nature of stress factors due to inter- personal conflict in the family of a person with neurotic disorders is shown in the table - 3.

It can be observed about the stress of the sample, more than one-third respondent said about the conflict of various degrees with a spouse. Near one-fourth of the sample has an inter-personal conflict with the parental family of spouse (in-laws), one-fifth has a conflict with other persons with his/her sibling and finally, one-eight

Table-3
Stress Due to Interpersonal Conflict in The Family

Nature of stress due to interpersonal conflict	No. of cases	% N=92
(1) With Spouse:	(15)	(14.3%)
With wife:		
- Environment tension	06	5.7
- Clashing temperaments	04	3.8
- Economic tension	05	4.8
With husband:	(28)	(26.7%)
- Environment tension	07	6.7
- Clashing temperament	05	4.8
- Economic tension	16	15.2
(2) With Parents:	(13)	(12.3%)
- Environment tension	03	2.9
- Clashing temperament	02	0.9
- Economic tension	06	5.7
- Unemployment	02	1.9
- Unstable occupation	01	0.9
(3) With in -laws:	(28)	(26.7%)
- Environment tension	17	16.2
- Clashing temperament	08	7.6
- Economic tension	03	2.8
(4) With brothers:	(21)	(20.0%)
- Economic tension	21	20.0
Total	105 *	100.0

* Totals are more than the number of respondents N= 92 due to multiple responses

has a conflict with their own parents. The cause of conflict with their family members was mainly due to environmental and economic tension in the nature of the inter-personal relationship which creates stress in the family relationship. The impact of stress on body function was come out in the forms of sleep disturbances in thirty per cent (30%) cases which are presented in Table - 4.

DISCUSSION

The data shows that the family stress and neurotic disorder was mainly due to the death of kin whom we care. The definition of kin could be considered relatives, relations, family members, kindred, connections, clan, tribe, kith and kin, one's own flesh and blood, nearest and dearest as well as animal and plants that are related to a particular species or kind.^[16] But in Indian Hindu Family System, the breadwinner of the family members may be the loving-kin, who looks after the family and provides food, cloth and rest of the necessities to the family requirement.

Another area of stress was found to be interpersonal conflict in the family of the sample. Of these, there may be a conflict between spouses; their parents; in-laws and brothers. It is indicated that the inter-personal conflict of wives with their husband due to economic tension and parental family of spouse due to environmental tension caused violation of family norms of each other, which was a significant factor causing stress in persons with a

Table - 4
Impact of Stress on the Functions of Persons with the Neurotic Disorders

Impact of stress on the functions of the body	No. of cases	% of Total Cases N= 92
(1) Impaired social functioning (poor concentration, absenteeism, quarrelsome, abusive, assertive and irritable)	16	05.8
(2) Physical complaints - (pain, burning, headache, numbness, indigestion, weakness, palpitation and poor appetite)	27	09.9
(3) Sleep disturbance	82	30.0
(4) Neurotic symptoms - (anxiety, fear, depression, suicidal thought and attempts)	77	28.2
(5) Neurological symptoms - (fits, giddiness, vomiting, black -out and incontinence)	71	26.1
Total	273 *	100.0

* Totals are more than the number of respondents N= 92 due to multiple responses.

neurotic disorder. The family and marital maladjustment and conflict thus create the problem stress mental disorders. The adjustment refers the variations and changes in behaviour that are necessary to satisfy the need and meet demands so that one can establish a harmonious relationship with the family environment.^[17] The remaining conflicts with their family members were also due to clashing temperament, unemployment and unstable occupation also in the family.

The above-mentioned findings indicators of the stress affect the physical and mental function of the sample which constitutes impaired social function, physical complaints, sleep disturbance, neurotic symptoms and neurological symptoms which show that sleep disturbance is significantly related to the mental function of persons with neurotic disorders.

CONCLUSION

In the present study sample, most of them were having interpersonal conflict in the family. The basic cause of the conflict was found to be due to environmental and economic tensions which affected the body function in the forms of sleep disturbance in thirty per cent cases.

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