



## OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND PROFESSIONAL WELLBEING AMONG HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE DISTRICT

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### Abstract:

Occupational stress has become one of the most significant challenges faced by health care professionals due to increasing workloads, extended working hours, emotional demands, technological advancements and the responsibility of providing quality patient care. High levels of occupational stress can adversely affect the physical health, mental well-being, job satisfaction and professional performance of health care workers, ultimately influencing the quality and safety of health care services. Professional well-being, which encompasses psychological health, work-life balance, professional fulfillment and organizational support, plays a crucial role in enabling health care professionals to perform their duties effectively while maintaining personal resilience. The present study aims to examine the level of occupational stress and its influence on the professional well-being of health care professionals in Coimbatore District. The study adopts a descriptive research design and utilizes both primary and secondary data. Primary data are collected using a structured questionnaire administered to health care professionals working in selected hospitals, while secondary data are gathered from books, research journals, government reports and other scholarly sources. Appropriate statistical tools are employed to analyze the relationship between occupational stress and professional well-being and to identify the major factors contributing to workplace stress. The findings may also assist hospital administrators and policymakers in developing effective stress management strategies and supportive workplace practices that contribute to a healthier, more productive and sustainable health care workforce.

**Keywords:** Occupational Stress, Professional Wellbeing, Health Care Professional

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The health care sector plays a fundamental role in promoting the health, well-being and quality of life of individuals and communities. Health care professionals, including doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, pharmacists, laboratory technicians and allied health personnel are responsible for delivering safe, effective and patient-centered care. The nature of their profession requires continuous attention, sound clinical judgment, emotional resilience and the ability to respond effectively to medical emergencies. However the increasing complexity of health care delivery, rapid technological advancements, rising patient expectations and growing administrative responsibilities have contributed to higher levels of occupational stress among health care professionals.

Occupational stress refers to the physical, emotional and psychological strain experienced when job demands exceed an individual's ability to cope with workplace responsibilities and available resources. In the health care profession stress may arise from heavy workloads, long and irregular working hours, staff shortages, shift duties, exposure to critical illnesses, emergency situations, emotional involvement with patients and their families and the need to make timely clinical decisions. If occupational stress remains unmanaged it can lead to burnout, fatigue, anxiety, reduced job satisfaction, absenteeism, decreased productivity and a decline in the quality of patient care. Prolonged stress may also affect the physical and mental health of health care professionals, increasing the risk of chronic health conditions and professional disengagement.

Professional well-being is a multidimensional concept that reflects an individual's ability to experience satisfaction, purpose, resilience and effectiveness in the workplace. It includes psychological health, emotional stability, physical wellness, work-life balance, professional competence, supportive relationships and a sense of accomplishment in one's career. Among health care professionals, professional well-being is essential for maintaining motivation, improving patient interactions, strengthening teamwork and ensuring the consistent delivery of high-quality health services. Organizations that prioritize employee well-being through supportive leadership, professional development opportunities, healthy work environments and stress management initiatives are more likely to achieve improved employee performance and organizational effectiveness.

## **NEED FOR THE STUDY**

Health care professionals perform a vital role in delivering quality medical services, often working under conditions characterized by heavy workloads, extended working hours, emotional demands, staff shortages and rapidly evolving medical technologies. These workplace pressures can contribute to occupational stress, which may negatively affect their physical and mental health, job satisfaction, professional performance and the quality of patient care. Professional well-being is equally important, as it enhances resilience, motivation, work-life balance and commitment to the organization. Despite increasing attention to employee well-being in the health care sector, there is limited empirical evidence on the relationship between occupational stress and professional well-being among health care professionals in Coimbatore District. Therefore this study is needed to assess the extent of occupational stress, examine its impact on professional well-being, identify the factors influencing both and provide practical recommendations that can help health care institutions create healthier work environments, improve employee well-being and enhance the overall quality of health care services.

## **IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

The present study is significant because it provides a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between occupational stress and professional well-being among health care professionals in Coimbatore District. The findings will help hospital administrators, human resource managers and policymakers identify workplace factors that

contribute to stress and implement appropriate measures to improve employee well-being, job satisfaction and organizational effectiveness. The study also highlights the importance of supportive work environments, effective stress management strategies, employee assistance programmes and professional development initiatives in promoting a motivated and resilient health care workforce. Furthermore the research contributes to the existing body of knowledge on occupational health and human resource management by providing context-specific evidence that can support policy formulation, organizational planning and future academic research, while ultimately contributing to improved patient care and sustainable health care delivery.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Health care professionals work in highly demanding environments where they are expected to provide quality patient care while managing heavy workloads, long working hours, emergency situations, emotional challenges, staff shortages and increasing administrative responsibilities. These workplace demands often result in occupational stress, which can adversely affect their physical health, psychological well-being, job satisfaction, professional performance and commitment to the organization. Persistent stress may also contribute to burnout, absenteeism, reduced productivity and compromised quality of patient care. Although professional well-being is recognized as an essential factor for maintaining a competent, motivated and resilient health care workforce, many professionals continue to face difficulties in achieving a healthy balance between occupational demands and personal well-being. In Coimbatore District where the health care sector has experienced significant growth and increasing service demands, there is limited empirical evidence regarding the relationship between occupational stress and professional well-being among health care professionals. Therefore the present study seeks to examine the extent of occupational stress, assess its impact on professional well-being, identify the major workplace factors contributing to stress and provide evidence-based recommendations that can help health care institutions develop effective strategies to improve employee well-being, organizational performance and the quality of health care services.

## **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**Catapano et al. (2023)** conducted a systematic review to examine interventions aimed at reducing occupational stress among healthcare professionals. The review analyzed studies involving physicians, nurses and other healthcare workers across different healthcare settings. The findings revealed that excessive workload, emotional exhaustion, long working hours and organizational pressures were major contributors to occupational stress. The authors reported that individual-level interventions such as mindfulness-based practices, cognitive behavioral therapy and resilience training significantly reduced stress, burnout and anxiety while improving professional wellbeing and quality of life. However organizational interventions alone demonstrated inconsistent outcomes, highlighting the need for healthcare institutions to combine personal coping strategies with supportive workplace policies. The study concluded that comprehensive stress management programs are essential for promoting psychological wellbeing and sustaining healthcare professionals' performance.

**Townsley, Li-Wang and Katta (2023)** conducted a systematic review focusing on positive psychology interventions designed to enhance the wellbeing of healthcare workers. The review examined evidence from multiple healthcare organizations and found that occupational stress negatively influenced emotional health, job satisfaction, resilience and professional engagement. The authors observed that interventions such as gratitude exercises, strengths-based activities, mindfulness and resilience-building programs improved psychological wellbeing, reduced emotional exhaustion and enhanced work engagement among healthcare professionals. The study emphasized that fostering positive workplace environments and encouraging supportive leadership can strengthen professional wellbeing while reducing the long-term effects of occupational stress. The authors recommended integrating positive psychology practices into routine employee wellness initiatives to improve both staff wellbeing and patient care outcomes.

**Cohen et al. (2023)** carried out a systematic review to evaluate workplace interventions aimed at improving wellbeing and reducing burnout among nurses, physicians and allied healthcare professionals. The review found that occupational stress was closely associated with high patient demands, staffing shortages, role ambiguity and inadequate organizational support. The authors identified that interventions combining leadership support, flexible work arrangements, peer support, mental health resources and organizational wellbeing strategies were more effective than isolated approaches. The findings indicated that healthcare organizations implementing comprehensive wellbeing programs experienced improvements in employee satisfaction, resilience and retention while reducing burnout and stress-related outcomes. The study concluded that sustainable professional wellbeing requires organizational commitment alongside individual stress management strategies to create healthier and more supportive healthcare work environments.

### **3. Methodology of the Study**

#### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To find out demographic profile of the respondents.
2. To assess the overall level of occupational stress and professional wellbeing among health care professionals.
3. To analysis at the differences between the demographic profile and occupational stress and professional wellbeing among health care professionals.
4. To offer recommendations for enhancing occupational stress and professional wellbeing among health care professionals.

#### **Design of the Research**

The present study adopts a **descriptive research design** to examine the occupational stress and professional wellbeing of healthcare professionals working in Coimbatore District. This research design is appropriate as it enables the systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data regarding the existing levels of occupational stress and professional wellbeing without manipulating any variables. The study seeks to describe the prevailing work

conditions, identify factors contributing to occupational stress, assess the level of professional wellbeing and examine the relationship between these two variables.

### **Universe of the Study**

The universe of the study comprises **all healthcare professionals employed in government and private hospitals, multispecialty hospitals, primary health centres, community health centres and other healthcare institutions located in Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu**. The target population includes medical officers, nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists, laboratory technicians, radiographers and other allied healthcare professionals who are directly involved in patient care and healthcare service delivery. Since these professionals perform demanding responsibilities under physically and emotionally challenging conditions, they represent an appropriate population for investigating occupational stress and professional wellbeing.

### **Sample Size**

For the present study a sample of **100 healthcare professionals** was selected from various healthcare institutions across Coimbatore District. The sample size was considered sufficient to ensure adequate representation of different categories of healthcare professionals and to facilitate meaningful statistical analysis. Participants were drawn from both government and private healthcare organizations to capture variations in occupational experiences and professional wellbeing. The selected sample enhances the reliability of the findings and enables the researcher to make valid inferences about the target population.

### **Method of Sampling**

The study employed a **stratified random sampling method** for selecting the respondents. Initially healthcare institutions in Coimbatore District were categorized into government and private sectors. Within each stratum healthcare professionals were further grouped according to their profession, such as doctors, nurses, pharmacists, laboratory technicians, physiotherapists and allied healthcare personnel. Respondents were then selected randomly from each group in proportion to their availability. This sampling technique ensured adequate representation of different professional categories, reduced sampling bias and improved the generalizability of the study findings.

### **Data Gathering Instruments**

The study primarily relied on **primary data** collected through a structured questionnaire. The instrument consisted of three sections. The first section gathered demographic and occupational information, including age, gender, marital status, educational qualification, profession, years of experience, type of healthcare institution, department, working hours and monthly income. The second section measured **occupational stress** using a standardized Occupational Stress Scale with responses recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly

Agree." The third section assessed **professional wellbeing** using a standardized Professional Wellbeing Scale that evaluated dimensions such as job satisfaction, emotional wellbeing, work engagement, professional fulfillment, interpersonal relationships and organizational support. The questionnaire was validated by experts in social work and healthcare management and its reliability was established using **Cronbach's Alpha**, indicating satisfactory internal consistency.

### Research Gap

Although several studies have examined occupational stress, burnout, and job satisfaction among healthcare professionals, relatively few have investigated the relationship between **occupational stress and professional wellbeing** in an integrated manner within the healthcare sector of **Coimbatore District**. Existing research has largely focused on specific professional groups, particularly nurses or physicians, while limited attention has been given to allied healthcare professionals who also face significant occupational demands. Furthermore there is a lack of comparative evidence encompassing professionals from both government and private healthcare institutions in the district. The present study addresses these gaps by providing a comprehensive assessment of occupational stress and professional wellbeing among diverse healthcare professionals, thereby contributing empirical evidence to support employee wellbeing initiatives and organizational development in the local healthcare system.

### Tools for Statistical Analysis

The collected data were coded, classified, tabulated and analyzed using the **Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)**. Descriptive statistical techniques, including **frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation**, were used to summarize the demographic profile of respondents and assess the levels of occupational stress and professional wellbeing. Inferential statistical methods such as the **Independent Sample t-test** and **One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)** were employed to examine differences in occupational stress and professional wellbeing across demographic and occupational variables was applied to identify the extent to which occupational stress predicts professional wellbeing among healthcare professionals. Statistical significance was tested at the **5 percent level ( $p < 0.05$ )** to ensure the accuracy and validity of the findings.

### 3. Finds of the Study

| S.NO | PERSONAL VARIABLES        | FREQUENCY     | RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE % |
|------|---------------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1    | Age                       | 30yrs - 45yrs | 62          | 62%          |
| 2    | Gender                    | Female        | 73          | 73%          |
| 3    | Educational Qualification | M. Sc Nursing | 63          | 63%          |

|   |                           |                     |    |     |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------|----|-----|
| 4 | <b>Experience</b>         | 10yrs to 15yrs      | 67 | 67% |
| 5 | Type of family            | Nuclear Family      | 75 | 75% |
| 6 | <b>Designation</b>        | Nursing             | 69 | 69% |
| 7 | <b>Monthly Income</b>     | Rs .20,000 to 30000 | 68 | 68% |
| 8 | <b>Department</b>         | In Patient          | 78 | 78% |
| 9 | <b>Place of Residence</b> | Semi-urban          | 72 | 72% |

- Majority (62%) of the respondents are 30- 45 years age group.
- Majority (73%) of the respondents are female.
- More than half of the respondents (63%) have completed M. Sc nursing degree.
- Majority (67%) of the respondent's are 10yrs to 15yrs experience.
- Majority (75%) of the respondents are nuclear family.
- Majority (69%) of the respondents designations are nursing.
- More than half of the respondents (68%) are **monthly incomes are Rs.20000 to Rs.30000.**
- Majority (78%) of the respondents working are in patient department.
- Majority (72%) of the respondents have **place of residence** are semi-urban.

#### DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO THEIR LEVEL OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND PROFESSIONAL WELLBEING AMONG HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

| <b>Occupational Stress and Professional Wellbeing among Health Care Professionals</b> | <b>No. of Respondents</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| High                                                                                  | 49                        | 49                    |
| Moderate                                                                              | 26                        | 26                    |
| Low                                                                                   | 25                        | 25                    |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                          | <b>100</b>                | <b>100</b>            |

#### Interpretation

According to the above table, 49% of respondents have a moderate level of occupational stress and professional wellbeing among health care professionals, 26% have a low level and 25% have a high level.

### Difference between of personal profile and level of occupational stress and professional wellbeing among health care professionals

| Variables                                                                                                  | Statistical tool | Value                 | Result           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Age and occupational stress and professional wellbeing among health care professionals                     | ANOVA            | F= 13.365<br>P<0.05   | Significant      |
| Gender and occupational stress and professional wellbeing among health care professionals                  | t-test           | t = .325<br>P>0.05    | Not- Significant |
| Education qualification and occupational stress and professional wellbeing among health care professionals | ANOVA            | F= .435<br>P>0.05     | Not-Significant  |
| <b>Experience</b> and occupational stress and professional wellbeing among health care professionals       | ANOVA            | F = 5.644<br>P<0.05   | Significant      |
| <b>Type of family</b> and occupational stress and professional wellbeing among health care professionals   | t-test           | t= 7.840<br>P<0.05    | Significant      |
| <b>Designation</b> and occupational stress and professional wellbeing among health care professionals      | ANOVA            | F= .198<br>P>0.05     | Not- Significant |
| <b>Monthly Income</b> and occupational stress and professional wellbeing among health care professionals   | ANOVA            | F = 8.868<br>P< 0.05  | Significant      |
| <b>Department</b> and occupational stress and professional wellbeing among health care professionals       | ANOVA            | F = .748<br>P> 0.05   | Not Significant  |
| Place of residency and occupational stress and professional wellbeing among health care professionals      | ANOVA            | F = 13.113<br>P< 0.05 | Significant      |

- There is significant difference in the age and occupational stress and professional wellbeing among health care professionals.
- There is no significant difference in the gender and occupational stress and professional wellbeing among health care professionals.
- There is no significant difference in the education qualification and occupational stress and professional wellbeing among health care professionals.
- There is significant difference in the **experience** and occupational stress and professional wellbeing among health care professionals.

- There is significant difference in the type of family and occupational stress and professional wellbeing among health care professionals.
- There is no significant difference in the **designation** and occupational stress and professional wellbeing among health care professionals.
- There is significant difference in the monthly income and occupational stress and professional wellbeing among health care professionals.
- There is no significant difference in the **department** and occupational stress and professional wellbeing among health care professionals.
- There is significant difference in the place of residency and occupational stress and professional wellbeing among health care professionals.

### **Recommendation**

- Healthcare institutions should implement regular occupational stress assessment programs to identify stress levels and provide timely interventions for healthcare professionals.
- Hospitals should establish employee wellness programs that include stress management workshops, mindfulness training, yoga and relaxation techniques.
- Adequate staffing levels should be maintained to reduce excessive workload, long working hours and burnout among healthcare professionals.
- Organizations should provide confidential psychological counseling and mental health support services to employees experiencing work-related stress.
- Hospital management should encourage a healthy work-life balance by adopting flexible work schedules, sufficient leave policies and adequate rest periods.
- Regular professional development and resilience-building training should be organized to enhance coping skills and improve professional well-being.
- Healthcare institutions should promote supportive leadership and open communication to create a positive work environment where employees feel valued and respected.
- Recognition and reward systems should be strengthened to acknowledge employees' dedication, improve job satisfaction and enhance overall professional well-being.
- Occupational health and safety policies should be continuously reviewed and improved to ensure a safe, healthy and stress-free working environment.
- Policymakers and healthcare administrators should develop comprehensive organizational strategies focusing on stress prevention, employee engagement and the promotion of long-term professional well-being among healthcare professionals.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that occupational stress is a significant factor influencing the professional well-being of healthcare professionals as the nature of their work often involves high responsibilities, demanding workloads, emotional challenges and time pressures. While moderate levels of stress may encourage better performance in certain situations, prolonged and unmanaged occupational stress can adversely affect job satisfaction, mental and physical health, work efficiency and the quality of patient care. Professional well-being is strengthened when healthcare organizations provide supportive leadership, adequate staffing, opportunities for professional growth, recognition and access to mental health and wellness resources. Creating a positive work environment that emphasizes work-life balance, effective communication and employee support can enhance resilience, motivation and commitment among healthcare professionals. Therefore reducing occupational stress and promoting professional well-being should be considered strategic priorities for healthcare institutions to improve employee performance, organizational effectiveness and the overall quality of healthcare services.

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