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Stress and stress management in health institutions

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to determine main stress factors that health workers face with and ways of coping with this stress. To this end, data were obtained by face to face questionnaire from 103 health care workers employed in Merzifon Asker Hastanesi. These data were analyzed with SPSS 16.0 package program. At the end of the study, 83 % of the participants stated that they have various stress factors. In the studied sample, disvaluation of work by others, inequitable distribution of tasks, common workplace gossip, relations with managers, injustice in performance evaluation as well as patient dissatisfaction and fear of complaints were found as leading stress factors. When methods for coping with stress were questioned, most common answers were; 'I repress', 'I fret', 'I try to solve by myself, and I will share with my close friends and my family'. It was found that stress factors and coping methods differ based on occupation, sex, and business life time. Considering that services in health sector should be carried out with the least error possible, its obvious that personnel satisfaction has a key role. Therefore, there is an urgent need for effective studies about individual and corporate stress management are needed in our health corporation for the reduction of stress factors.

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Keywords: health workers; occupational stress; stress factors; stress management.

1. Introduction

Stress which have significant effects on individuals, and affect their attitudes, behavior and interpersonal relationships, is a case formed by the combination of several factors. For the formation of stress, people need to be affected by the environment they live in. People's physical and emotional status, lifestyle, financial status determines the level of being affected by these changes. In today's society, stress-related diseases increase day by day, so the people and institutions are confronted with an important problem to be faced (Torun, 1997 and Rice, 1999).

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Since they provide service to intensively stressed individuals and also the staff encounters with stressful situations very often, the field of health care is considered as a work environment a lot more stressful than the other work environments (Görgülü, 1990). While providing the service, health care staff, they see a lot of patients and patient relatives with many different levels of health problems. These situations threatening an individual's health and causing stress due to uncertainty and obscurity affect the health care staff as well as the patient (Aslan et al.1998).

Health institutions in Turkey inherently have many problems for health care workers as well as managers. These problems appear to be the stress factor of health care workers. Among health institutions' staff, especially nurses and doctors directly contact the patients, so the patients' unpleasant behavior as a reaction to the negative circumstances they are in can easily cause stress for the staff (Laal and Aliramaı, 2010).

Individuals under stress have difficulty in succeeding and also being happy. Stress management should be focused in order to protect people's mental and physical health, life quality and efficiency in their daily lives. It is very important to recognize the stress which directly affects the health care institutions' success and to have information about its symptoms and how to manage it in terms of minimizing the negative consequences it will cause.

Therefore, it is thought that it is necessary to make researches on determining the health staff's strategies of coping with stress dependant on the work condition. This survey was conducted to determine the stress levels of health care workers in the work environment, factors affecting them and their strategies in coping with stress.

2. Materials and methods

In this descriptive study, it is aimed to identify the stress factors and the strategies in coping with stress of the health care providers in Amasya Merzifon Military Hospital. Population of the study consists of all medical staff working in the Merzifon military hospital (n = 106), no samples are chosen and all the population is evaluated in the study. Research data collected between February-March 2013, the population of the study includes 103 people since 3 people are on maternity leave. All the data were obtained by the data form created by the researchers. Besides the questions about the demographic features, 8 questions about the work life of the staff, 3 questions about the resources about the resource of stress, 10 questions about the change in their behavior under stress, 1 question about measuring the reactions to stress, totally 27 questions are included in the survey. The obtained data were analyzed by SPSS program. Data were evaluated by using number percentage calculations and chi-square importance test.

3. Results

Table 1. Socio-demographic and occupational characteristics of health workers (n= 103)

Demographic features		n	%
Gender	Female	41	39,8
	Male	62	60,2
Age	25-29 years old	6	5,8
	30-34 years old	23	22,3
	35-39 years old	36	35,0
	40-44 years old	21	20,4
	45-49 years old	17	16,5
Level of education	Elementary	5	4,9
	High school	19	18,4
	Associate's	23	22,3
	Undergraduate	36	35,0
	Post graduate	20	19,4
Profession	Physician	16	15,5
	Nurse	27	26,2
	Health Technician	17	16,5
	Allied Health Personnel	10	9,7
	Administrative Services	33	32,0
Unit	Chief physician	35	34,0
	Chief Nurse	37	35,9
	Administration	31	30,1
Shift	Night	69	67,0
	Day	34	33,0

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