Stressors, Stress Response and Coping Among Rural School Teachers With and Without Hypertension

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ABSTRACT: The aim was to study the difference in stressors experienced, level of stress and coping used between individuals with and without hypertension among rural government school teachers. The sample consisted of both men and women working in rural government schools, married (with at least one child), and aged between 30 to 35 years, with work experience of at least 5 years. A matched group design in terms of age, number of years of experience, gender, socioeconomic status, salary, number of working members working in the family was considered for the study. Over all 30 each of teachers with and without hypertension consuming medication for at least 3 years and below cut off point on General health questionnaire and gave consent to be part of the study were selected for the study. All these individuals were administered Personal Stress Source Inventory, Stress Response Checklist and Coping styles inventory. The results were analysed using t test to study significance of difference in the means of the stressors, stress response and coping used by individual with and without hypertension. The results indicated that there was no significant difference in stressors experienced between the groups, where as there was significant difference in level of stress and coping used. The group with hypertension had significantly higher level of stress response and significantly less use of coping methods indicating that it is the response to stressors and coping methods used that could be related to hypertension than the number of stressors faced by the individual, indirectly indicating that personality and the responses are integral part of disease experienced.

KEY WORDS: Coping, Rural School Teachers and Hypertension, Stressors, Stress Response.

INTRODUCTION
Stress is defined as the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it (Rosenham and Seligman, 1989; Selye H, 1979). The "demand" can be a threat, a challenge or any kind of change, which requires the body to adapt. Stress is understood as a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that demands exceed the personal and social resources unable to mobilize. Stress is usually characterized by physiological and psychological responses. Personal and environmental events that cause stress are known as stressors (Lazarus, 1990). Therefore, stress is simply defined as emotional disturbances or changes caused by stressors. There is likely a connection between stress and illness. Theories of the stress–illness link suggest that both acute and chronic stress can cause illness, and several studies found such a link (Schneiderman, Ironson & Siegel, 2005). It is noteworthy that over exposure stress causes physical, emotional and mental health problems (Niemi and Vainiomaki, 1999). Therefore, early detection and intervention may prevent and minimize the exert effects of stress in the future (Aktekin, Karaman, Senol, Erdem, Erengin and Akaydin, 2001; Firth, 1986; Guthrie, Black, Bagalkote, Shaw, Campbell and Creed, 1998; Sherina, Lekhraj and Nadarajan, 2003). Park and Adler (2003) reported that effective and appropriate coping strategies may buffer the impact of newly encountered stressful situations on mental and physical health. According to Folkman (1980) & Lazarus (1984) coping strategies can be grouped into two general types; problem-focused and emotion-focused coping. Problem-focused coping is aimed at problem solving or doing something to alter the source of stress. Emotion-focused coping is aimed at reducing or managing the emotional distress that is associated with the situation. Although most stressors elicit both types of coping, problem-focused coping tends to predominate when people feel that something constructive can be done, whereas emotion-focused coping tends to predominate when people feel that the stressor is something that must be endured (Folkman and Lazarus, 1980; Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Not specific studies have been done among teacher related to these issues and hence with these issues in background the present study aimed at understanding the stressors experienced, level of stress and coping used among individuals with and without hypertension among rural government school teachers.

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Volume 06 Issue 01 January 2023
Available at: ijcrr.org
Page No. 125-128
AIM
To study the stressors experienced level of stress and coping used among individuals with and without hypertension among rural government school teachers.

OBJECTIVE
To study the difference in stressors experienced, level of stress and coping used between individuals with and without hypertension among rural government school teachers.

HYPOTHESES
- There will be significant difference in stressors experience between rural school teachers with and without hypertension.
- There will be significant difference in level of stress experience between rural school teachers with and without hypertension.
- There will be significant difference in coping between rural school teachers with and without hypertension.

Independent variable:
Rural government school teachers with and without hypertension were considered for the study.

Dependent variables:
Reported stressors experienced, level of stress and coping used as dependent variables.

Sample:
- 30 rural government schools aged between 30 to 35 years with hypertension.
- 30 rural government schools aged between 30 to 35 years without hypertension.

Inclusion criteria:
- Both men and women working in rural government schools aged between 30 to 35 years were considered for the study.
- Married individuals (with at least one child) were considered for the study.
- Individuals with work experience of at least 5 years were considered for the study.
- Individual diagnosed as hypertension consuming medication for at least 3 years were considered for the study.

Exclusion criteria:
- Individuals with major physical and psychological problem were not considered for the study.
- Individuals with major disability were not considered for the study.
- Individuals with above cut off point on General Health Questionnaire were not considered for the study.

RESEARCH DESIGN
A matched group design in terms of age, number of years of experience, gender, socioeconomic status, salary, number of working members working in the family was considered for the study.

Tools:
- General Health Questionnaire (Goldberg & Hillier, 1972)
- Personal Stress Source Inventory (Singh, 2004)
- Stress Response Checklist (Verma, 1997)
- The Coping Checklist (Rao, Subbakraishna and Prabhu 1989)

Procedure:
Over all 30 each of teachers with and without hypertension consuming medication for at least 3 years and below cut off point on General health questionnaire while fulfilling inclusion criteria and who gave consent to be part of the study were selected for the study. All these individuals were administered Personal Stress Source Inventory, Stress Response Checklist and Coping styles inventory, the scales scored and results analysed.
Analysis of results:
The results were analysed using t test to study significance of difference in the means of the stressors, stress response and coping used by individual with and without hypertension.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The aim was to study the difference in stressors experienced, level of stress and coping used between individuals with and without hypertension among rural government school teachers. The results were analysed using t test to study significance of difference in the means of the stressors, stress response and coping used by individual with and without hypertension.

Table 1: showing the mean, SD & ‘t’ values for the stressors experience between rural school teachers with and without hypertension:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With hypertension</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>75.43</td>
<td>18.64</td>
<td>2.03NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without hypertension</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>81.77</td>
<td>16.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NS= Not significant at P>.05 Level

Table 2: showing the mean, SD & ‘t’ values for the level of stress experience between rural school teachers with and without hypertension:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With hypertension</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>97.37</td>
<td>24.66</td>
<td>2.34*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without hypertension</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>110.13</td>
<td>16.88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**P <.05

Table 3: showing the mean, SD & ‘t’ values for the coping between rural school teachers with and without hypertension:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With hypertension</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25.78</td>
<td>8.32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without hypertension</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32.63</td>
<td>6.49</td>
<td>3.68**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** P<.01

The results showed that there was no significant difference in stressors experienced between rural government schools with and without hypertension. But there was significant difference in level of stress experienced between rural government school teachers with and without hypertension. The group with hypertension had significantly higher level of stress response than the other group. There was also significant difference in coping used between rural government school teachers with and without hypertension. The group with hypertension had significantly less use of coping methods than the other group. The results indicates that it is the response to stressors and coping methods used that could be related to hypertension than the number of stressors faced by the individual, indirectly indicating that personality and the responses are integral part of disease experienced.

CONCLUSIONS
The results indicated that:
- There was no significant difference in stressors experienced between school teachers with and without hypertension.
- There was significant difference in level of stress experienced between school teachers with and without hypertension.
- There was significant difference in coping used between school teachers with and without hypertension.
- The group with hypertension had significantly higher level of stress response than the other group.
- The group with hypertension had significantly less use of coping methods than the other group.
- The results indicates that it is the response to stressors and coping methods used that could be related to hypertension than the number of stressors faced by the individual, indirectly indicating that personality and the responses are integral part of disease experienced.
REFERENCES


7. Niemi PM and Vainiomaki PT. Medical students' academic distress, coping and achievement strategies during the pre-clinical years, Teaching & Learning in Medicine, 1999; 11 (3): 125-134.


