

Self-esteem and Stress Coping among Proficiency Certificate Level Nursing Students in Nursing Campus Maharajgunj Lalitpur Nursing Campus

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ABSTRACT

Background: Nursing requires high self-esteem and effective coping strategies for the quality of health services that they deliver. Self-esteem and stress coping mechanism developed during education period is foundation for professional practice. So, this study was conducted to identify self-esteem, coping activities, and their relationship.

Methods: Descriptive cross sectional study was conducted among 287 PCL nursing students currently studying in different level in nursing campuses of the Institute of Medicine during June and July 2013. Self administered semi structured questionnaire and rating scales were used for the data collection.

Results: Findings showed that 21 (7.31%), 194 (67.5%), and 67 (23.34%), students had very high, high and moderate, self-esteem and only five (1.74%) have low self-esteem. The difference in self-esteem level was insignificant with the level of the students. Students most frequently used problem focused (3.36 ± 0.54) followed by emotion focused (3.04 ± 0.45) and avoidance coping activities (2.91 ± 0.63). The relationship of use of coping activities and level of students was statistically insignificant. Self-esteem level had positive relation with problem focused and emotion focused coping activities (Pearson r : 0.114 and 0.118), though the correlation was significant with emotion focused coping activities only. Bicytopenia and pancytopenia were seen in two cases each of myelodysplastic syndrome. Chronic myeloid leukemia and Non-Hodgkin lymphoma showed anemia and pancytopenia respectively.

Conclusions: Majority of PCL nursing students have high level of self-esteem. They used problem focused coping activities most however, use of it decreased with increased level of students. Students with high self-esteem used problem focused followed by emotion focused coping activities. Students should be encouraged to use problem focused coping activities.

Keywords: PCL nursing students; self-esteem; stress coping.

INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem is an important personality trait for healthcare professionals including nursing.¹ Self-esteem is overall evaluation of one's worth or value and an important predictor of stress coping. Although students cannot avoid some stressors, it is important to acquire coping ability.² Higher stress levels may result in reduction of self-esteem. High self-esteem results in more active and effective coping.³ In other side, adequate coping has been reported to predict higher levels of self-esteem.^{4,5}

The personal coping style developed during adolescence can determine the coping style employed in adulthood.⁶

Assessing the self-esteem and coping activities of PCL nursing students is necessary as they are in transition and challenging period, in which self-esteem can be compromised.⁴ Especially in Nepal, there is not much known about coping strategies and their relationship with self-esteem, among nursing students. So this study was conducted to identify self-esteem, coping activities, and their relationship.

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METHODS

Descriptive cross sectional study was conducted among PCL nursing students currently studying in Nursing Campus Maharajgunj (NCM) and Lalitpur Nursing Campus (LNC) of the Institute of Medicine during June and July 2013. Sample size was 287 (153 from NCM and 134 from LNC). All the students (317) studying in respective campuses were the sample population and students who were willing to participate in the study were included in the study. Semi structured questionnaire for demographic information and rating scale to assess coping activities were developed by the researcher based on review of similar studies. Standard "Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale" developed by Rosenberg in 1965 was used to assess self esteem level. The scale consists of 10 items, each item is scored on a five-point scale from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). Scoring was accomplished by summing responses to the questions and mean score. Higher mean score indicates high level of self esteem. Statements related to coping activities were classified in three dimensions: problem focused, emotion focused and avoidance coping activities and rated on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 to 5 (1=never use, 2 = seldom use, 3 = sometime use, 4 = often use, 5 = always use). The higher mean score of each dimension indicates frequent usage of this coping style.

Ethical approval was taken from the Institutional Review Board of Institute of Medicine. Permission for data collection was taken from respective campuses. An informed verbal consent was taken from the students after explaining about study and its purpose. The questionnaire was pretested among nursing students (7% of the sample size) of MNC and they were excluded from the study. Self administered questionnaire was distributed to students in the classroom and returned back in the presence of researcher. So, there was no problem of drop out and incomplete response. Data entry and analysis was carried using SPSS version 18. Both descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation test was used for data analysis.

RESULTS

Among the 287 PCL nursing students, 95 (33.1%) were from first year, 98 (34.1%) from second year and 94 (32.8%) from third year (Table 1). Age of the respondents ranged from 15 years to 25 years. Mean age was 18.32 ± 1.41 years. Highest number of students were Brahman and Chhetri 126 (44%) followed by Newar 86 (30%), Mangolians (Gurung, Magar, Tamang) 62 (21.6%). Majority of students were Hindus 237(82.6%), majority 245 (85.6%) of them belong to nuclear family. Most of them 284 (99%) were unmarried (Table 2).

Table 1. Distribution of students according to campus and level.

Campus and Level	No (n=287)	%
Name of Nursing Campuses		
Nursing Campus Maharajgunj	153	53.3
Lalitpur Nursing Campus	134	46.7
Level of Students		
PCL First Year	95	33.1
PCL Second Year	98	34.1
PCL Third Year	94	32.8
Total	287	100

Table 2. Demographic information of the students.

Demographic Variables	No.	%
Age		
<18 Years	85	29.6
18-21 Years	185	64.5
> 21 Years	17	5.9
Mean Age	18.32	
SD	1.41	
Ethnic Group		
Bramhan, Chhetri	126	44.0
Newar	86	30.0
Mangolian (Gurung, Magar, Tamang)	62	21.6
Kirat (Rai, Limbu, Subba)	9	3.1
Dalit	3	1.0
Tharu	1	0.3
Religion		
Hindu	237	82.6
Buddhism	37	12.9
Christian	13	4.5
Marital status		
Unmarried	284	99.0
Married	3	1.0
Type of Family		
Nuclear	245	85.6
Joint	42	14.4
Total	287	100

Table 3. Self esteem level according to level of the students (n=287).

	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Total
	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	
First Year	3 (3.15)	22 (23.15)	63 (66.31)	7 (7.36)	95 (33.10)
Second Year	1 (1.02)	24 (24.48)	67 (68.36)	6 (6.12)	98 (34.14)
Third Year	1 (1.06)	21 (22.34)	64 (68.08)	8 (8.51)	94 (32.75)
Total	5 (1.74)	67 (23.34)	194 (67.5)	21 (7.31)	287 (100.00)

Table 4. Stress coping activities among PCL nursing students (n=287).

S.N.	Stress Coping Activities	Mean	SD
I. Problem Focused Coping Activities			
1	Thinking positive and being confident in own actions	3.83	0.84
2	Accepting the reality	3.61	1.12
3	Managing time better.	3.53	1.06
4	Taking situation as a challenge.	3.34	1.10
5	Being aware of own limits.	3.28	1.08
6	Limiting contact to the source of stress.	3.07	0.97
7	Asking for assistance to the clinical instructor.	2.84	1.08
	Mean and SD	3.36	0.54
II. Emotion focused activities			
1	Spending time with loved ones (Friends, family).	3.79	1.05
3	Taking time to rest and relax.	3.77	0.92
2	Seeking spiritual support: Praying to God.	3.75	1.28
4	Sleeping	3.57	1.07
5	Using the internet (chat, facebook etc.) and playing on line games.	3.40	1.21
6	Listening to music, singing and dancing.	3.39	1.07
7	Enjoying a pleasurable activity. (Playing instruments, reading books and magazines, etc.)	3.39	1.16
8	Sharing of feelings to a fellow student.	3.32	1.16
9	Watching movies and other programs on television.	3.21	1.08
10	Eating favorite food	3.09	1.23
11	Daydreaming.	2.83	1.23
12	Doing Physical exercise (jogging, aerobics, etc.)	2.13	1.02
13	Taking medication as a reliever.	1.28	1.14
14	Drinking alcohol beverages and smoking.	1.11	0.76
	Mean and SD	3.04	0.45
III. Avoiding activities			
1	Getting angry and having mood swings.	3.11	1.15
2	Reasoning out	2.92	1.00
3	Ignoring the problem	2.68	1.05
4	Making own-self busy by doing household chores.	2.90	1.14
	Mean and SD	2.91	0.63

Table 5. Correlation between coping activities and level of students.

	Problem focused coping	Emotion focused coping	Avoiding style coping
Level of students	-.020	.094	.113

No significant relationship between Level of student and style of coping at 95% confidence level

Table 6. Correlation among different coping activities.

	Problem focused coping	Emotion focused coping	Avoidance coping
Problem focused coping	1	0.383**	0.300**
Emotion focused coping		1	0.258**
Avoidance coping			1

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2 tailed)

Table 7. Correlation between different coping activities and self-esteem.

Problem Focused Coping	Emotion Focused Coping	Avoidance Focused Coping	Self- esteem 5 Scale
0.114	0.118	-0.010	1

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Finding shows that 194 (67.5%) students have a high self-esteem level. Similarly, 67 (23.34%) had moderate self-esteem and 21 (7.31%) had very high-level of self-esteem. However, five (1.74%) students were also found having low self-esteem.

Among 95 first year students, seven (7.36%), 63 (66.31%), 22 (23.15%), and three (3.15%) had have very high, high, moderate, and low level self-esteem respectively. Similarly, among 98 second year students, six (6.12%), 67 (68.36%), 24 (24.28%), and one (1.02%) had have very high, high, moderate, and low self-esteem level. Similarly out of 94 third year students, eight (8.51%), 64 (68.08%), 21 (22.34%), and one (1.06%) had very high, high, moderate and low-level of self-esteem (Table 3). Difference in self-esteem level is insignificant with the level of students at 95% confidence level (Kendall's tau-b Association test p-value = 0.565).

The most common stress coping activities used by the students was problem focused coping activities (mean: 3.36 ± 0.54) followed by emotion focused coping activities (mean: 3.04 ± 0.45), where avoidance was the least used (mean: 2.91 ± 0.63) (Table 4).

Within the problem focused coping activities, common activities in descending order were thinking positive and being confident in own actions (mean 3.83 ± 0.84), accepting the reality (mean 3.61 ± 1.12), managing time better (mean 3.53 ± 1.06), taking situation as a challenge (mean 3.34 ± 1.10) and being aware of own limits (mean 3.28 ± 1.08). They least used the activities asking for support to the clinical instructor (mean 2.84 ± 1.08) (Table 4).

Common emotion focused coping activities used were spending time with loved ones like friends, family (mean 3.79 ± 1.05), followed by taking time to rest and relax (mean 3.77 ± 0.92), praying to God (mean 3.75 ± 1.28), sleeping (mean 3.57 ± 1.07), using the internet (Chat, Facebook etc.) and playing on-line games (mean 3.40 ± 1.21), listening to music, singing and dancing (mean 3.39 ± 1.07). Very few of them were also used taking medication as a reliever (mean 1.28 ± 1.14) and drinking alcohol beverages and smoking (mean 1.11 ± 0.76) (Table 4).

Similarly common avoidance coping activities used were getting angry and having mood swings (mean 3.11 ± 1.15), reasoning out (mean 2.92 ± 1.10), and ignoring the problem (mean 2.68 ± 1.10) (Table 4).

The relationship between level of student and coping activities reveals that students used less problem

focused coping activities with increased academic level (Pearson $r = -0.020$). However, emotion focused and avoidance coping activities are directly related to level of students ($r = 0.094$ and 0.113 respectively) (Table 5).

The association among three types of coping activities was assessed with the Pearson correlation test. The correlation coefficient value between problem focused and emotion focused coping activities was 0.383, problems focused and avoiding coping activities was 0.300 and between emotion focused and avoiding coping activities was 0.258. All these relationships are also significant at 1% significance level (Table 6).

Self-esteem level of nursing students at certificate level had a positive relation with problem focused and emotion focused coping activities (Pearson r : 0.114 and 0.118). On other hand, there was negative relationship between avoiding coping activities and level of self-esteem (Pearson r : - 0.10). It means students with high self-esteem used problem focused and emotion focused coping although students with low self-esteem mostly used avoiding situation as coping activities. Nevertheless, the correlation among self-esteem level and different style coping activities has no statistical significance at the 0.05 level of significance except emotion focused coping style (Table 7).

DISCUSSION

Nursing students with a higher level of self-esteem may be more inclined to use positive coping. In this study, 21 (7.31%), 194 (67.5%), and 67 (23.34%) had very high, high, and moderate self-esteem, and only five (1.74%) students were found having low self-esteem. Difference in self-esteem was insignificant among the first, second and third year PCL nursing students. Study done by Chaves ECL, Simao TP, Oliveira IS, Souza IP, lunes DH et al among 135 nursing students in Brazil revealed that 68.3%, 30.3%, and 1.4%, nursing students had have high, average and low self esteem. The difference in self esteem was also insignificant with the level of the students ($r = 0.009$, $p = 0.918$).⁷ However another study has shown difference in self-esteem in different level of nursing education. In a longitudinal study done by Edward D, Burnard P, Bennett K, Hebden U in UK among nursing students enrolled in year of 2002 with data collection at various time points, has demonstrated that levels of self-esteem were significantly different at different stages of nursing training process. Self-esteem levels were lowest at the end of training.⁸

The study shows that self-esteem level of nursing students had positive relationship with problem focused

and emotion focused coping activities (Pearson r : 0.114 and 0.118) and negative relationship between avoiding coping activities (Pearson r : - 0.10). It indicates that nursing students having high self esteem used more problem focused coping activities and less avoiding coping activities. Study done by Lo R to assess sources of stress, coping mechanism and self-esteem among nursing students during three years of their undergraduate nursing program indicated that students in third year had more positive self-esteem than second year students. Study also revealed that avoidance coping behaviors, and negative self-esteem were significantly correlated ($P < 0.01$) and positive self-esteem was significantly correlated ($P < 0.01$) with both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping skills.⁹ Another cross-sectional study done by Ni C, Daiwei L. D, Liu X, Yang Q, MaJ, et al in china among 686 nursing students in 2010 using simplified coping style questionnaire and self esteem scale identified a strong relationship between a higher level of self-esteem, and positive coping among female nursing students.²

Earlier studies reported that females more often endorsed an emotion focused than problem-focused coping style and they seek more social support. The most common stress coping activities used by the students in this study was problem focused (mean: 3.36 ± 0.54) followed by emotion focused coping activities (3.04 ± 0.45). Study done in 2009 by Ellawela Y.G., Fonesko P., among 525 female nursing students in Nurses Training School in Galle Srilanka indicated that > 40% nursing students practiced a problem-focused coping strategy.¹⁰

In this study, students least used the activities asking for support to the clinical instructor as problem focused coping. A descriptive study done in 2010 by Nancy R. K. among 180 nursing students of a private nursing institute of Punjab to assess stress level and coping strategies also found that, "Seeking diversion" is the most common and "Seeking professional support" is the least common coping strategy.¹¹

Common coping activities used by the students were thinking positive, spending time with family and friends, taking time to rest and relax, praying to God, accepting the reality, sleeping, managing time better, using the internet (Chat, Facebook, on-line games etc.), taking situation as a challenge, listening to music, singing and dancing. Study done by Hsiao Y.C., Chier L.Y., Chiang C.M., Huang S.T. et al. among nursing students at Chiang Mai University revealed that the most frequently used coping strategies were seeking social support (62.25%), plan problem solving (23.73%) and accepting

responsibility (8.47%).¹² Another study done by Dhar R, Walia I, and Das K A in Chandigarh reported the five most frequently used coping strategies were positive thinking, listening to the music/radio, indulging in creative activities, talk to parents and praying.¹³ In this study, very few of them were used to taking medication as a reliever (mean 1.28 ± 1.14) and drinking alcohol beverages and smoking (mean 1.11 ± 0.76). In another study done in Nurse Training School Galle, Srilanka also identified the least common strategies used by nursing students to cope with stress as smoking (24%), using drugs (27.7%), liquor, wine or beer (29.3%).¹⁰

CONCLUSION

Study finding shows that majority of PCL nursing students have high level of self-esteem. They used problem focused coping activities most, however, use of it decreased with increased level of students. They least used consultation with teacher as problem focused coping activities. Students with high self-esteem used problem focused and emotion focused activities. Students should be encouraged to use problem focused coping activities. The teaching strategies that promote the self-esteem will be useful for helping nursing students develop effective coping styles.

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