

Assessment of Stress amongst Medical Practitioners During COVID-19 Second Wave: An Observational Study

Archana Joshi^{1*}, Dr. Jyeshtharaj Patangankar²

ABSTRACT

The novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19), which originated in Wuhan, China, was declared as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on January 30th, 2020. There was tremendous stress on medical practitioners especially working in COVID unit. Further after unlocking completed, despite of vaccinations, due to mutation in Covid-19 strain, cases tend to rise in very sharply, resulting into second wave of pandemic. 55 Medical Practitioners working in COVID hospital in Aurangabad region responded and studied. Results shown that 35 of those that is 70% were in moderate stress, 09(18%) are in severe stress and 06(15%) are mildly stressed.

Keywords: COVID-19, Stress, Medical Practitioners

The novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19), which originated in Wuhan, China, was declared as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on January 30th, 2020^[1]. After exponential rise in cases of COVID, different countries took various measures to control its spread, a nationwide “lockdown” was one such step. The Government of India announced a nationwide lockdown from March 25th, 2020^[2]. Citizens were mandated to stay at home, and all major offices, malls, factories, and schools were shut down for around 45 days [2]. While the lockdown was intended to control the spread of the cases, it had psychological impact on the peoples^[3-6]. There was tremendous stress on medical practitioners especially working in COVID unit. Further after unlocking completed, despite of vaccinations, due to mutation in Covid-19 strain, cases tend to rise in very sharply, resulting into second wave of pandemic. Presently Maharashtra is facing such a medical emergency due to outnumbered daily rise and limited resources and expert doctors, which increased working hours of the present medical professionals. Such Extraordinary burden of healthcare resources impacted health system, which further increased stress and anxiety amongst doctors who are actually working but couldn't do their job due to limited resources.

The stress amongst these professionals have impacted their day-to-day life. Interfering with the working potential, increased irritability, decreased joyful and healthy living. Identification

¹Consultant Psychologist, Pain Panacea Super Specialty Pain Clinic, Aurangabad, India

²Consultant Pain Physician, Pain Panacea Super Specialty Pain Clinic, Aurangabad & Assistant Professor at MGM Medical College & Hospital, Aurangabad, India

*Corresponding Author

Received: May 09, 2021; Revision Received: June 01, 2021; Accepted: June 21, 2021

Assessment of Stress amongst Medical Practitioners During COVID-19 Second Wave: An Observational Study

and management of stress in medical professionals is utmost important factor to improve their well being which will be indirectly affecting common people's well-being. Here, we will be studying stress amongst Medical professionals working in COVID era.

METHODOLOGY

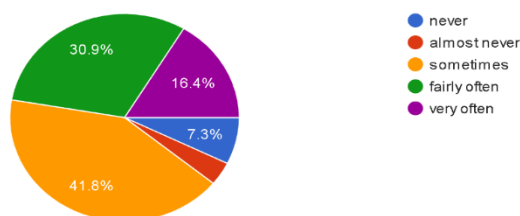
Present study was conducted in Aurangabad region, Maharashtra state, Medical practitioners practicing in various Covid Hospitals were analysed. Data was collected with the help of internet based google forms. Perceived stress questionnaire was circulated through google forms amongst medical practitioners working in covid hospitals. Responses were recorded and analysed according to guidelines of perceived stress scale.

Perceived stress scale^[7]:- The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) is the most widely used psychological instrument for measuring the perception of stress. It is a measure of the degree to which situations in one's life are appraised as stressful. Items were designed to tap how unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded respondents find their lives. The scale also includes a number of direct queries about current levels of experienced stress. Moreover, the questions are of a general nature and hence are relatively free of content specific to any subpopulation group. The questions in the PSS ask about feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, respondents are asked how often they felt a certain way. PSS scores are obtained by reversing responses (e.g., 0 = 4, 1 = 3, 2 = 2, 3 = 1 & 4 = 0) to the four positively stated items (items 4, 5, 7, & 8) and then summing across all scale items.

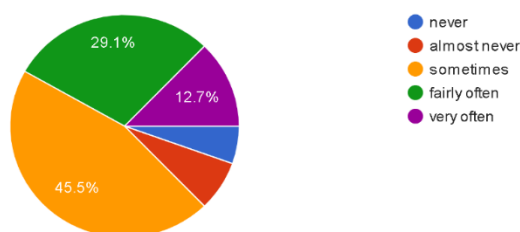
RESULTS

Total 80 Practitioners were considered in study, of those 55 Medical Practitioners working in COVID hospital in Aurangabad region responded and studied. This was a cross-sectional study conducted via internet based Google forms through which perceived stress scale was distributed and responses were noted.

In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?
55 responses



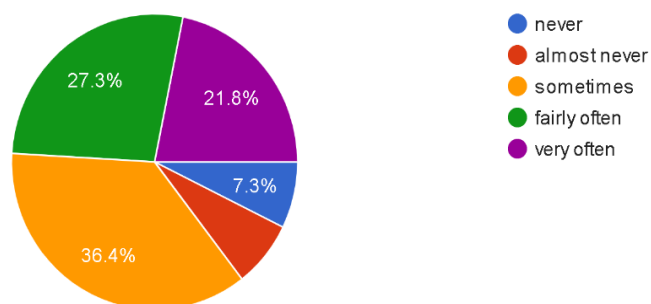
In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?
55 responses



Assessment of Stress amongst Medical Practitioners During COVID-19 Second Wave: An Observational Study

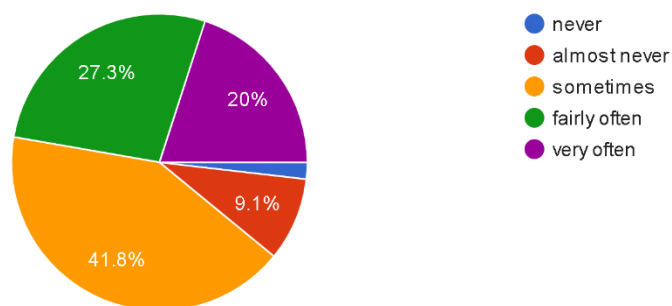
In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and “stressed”?

55 responses



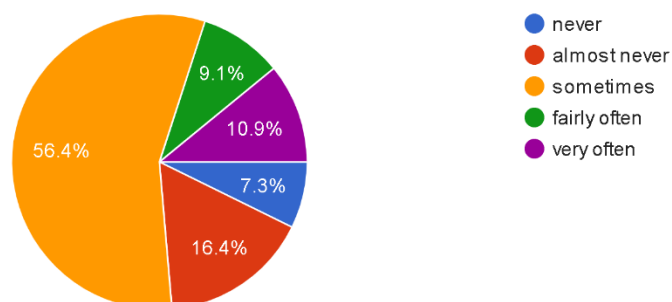
In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?

55 responses



In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?

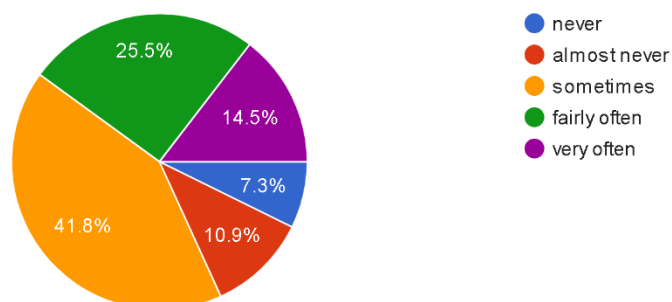
55 responses



Assessment of Stress amongst Medical Practitioners During COVID-19 Second Wave: An Observational Study

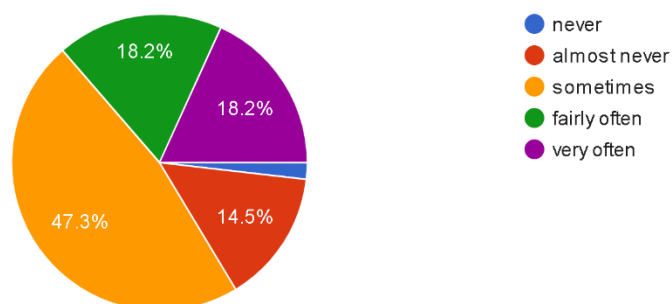
In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to

55 responses



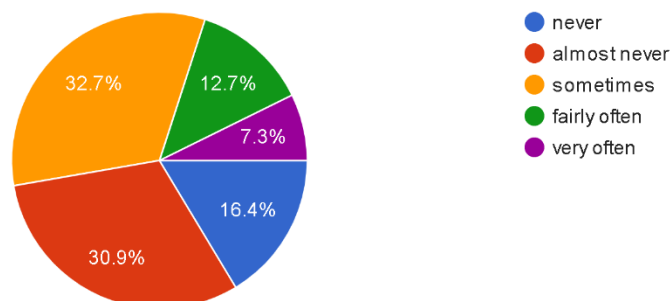
In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?

55 responses



In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?

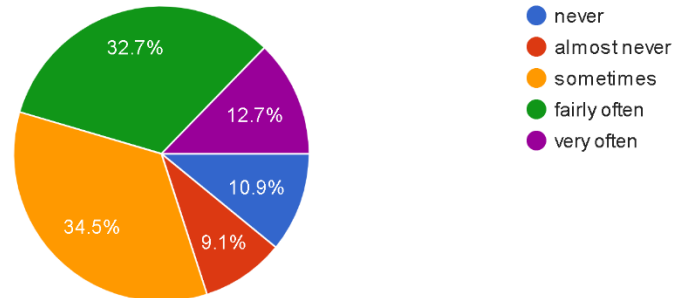
55 responses



Assessment of Stress amongst Medical Practitioners During COVID-19 Second Wave: An Observational Study

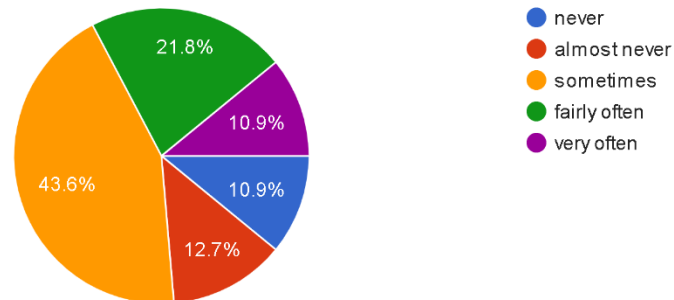
In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?

55 responses

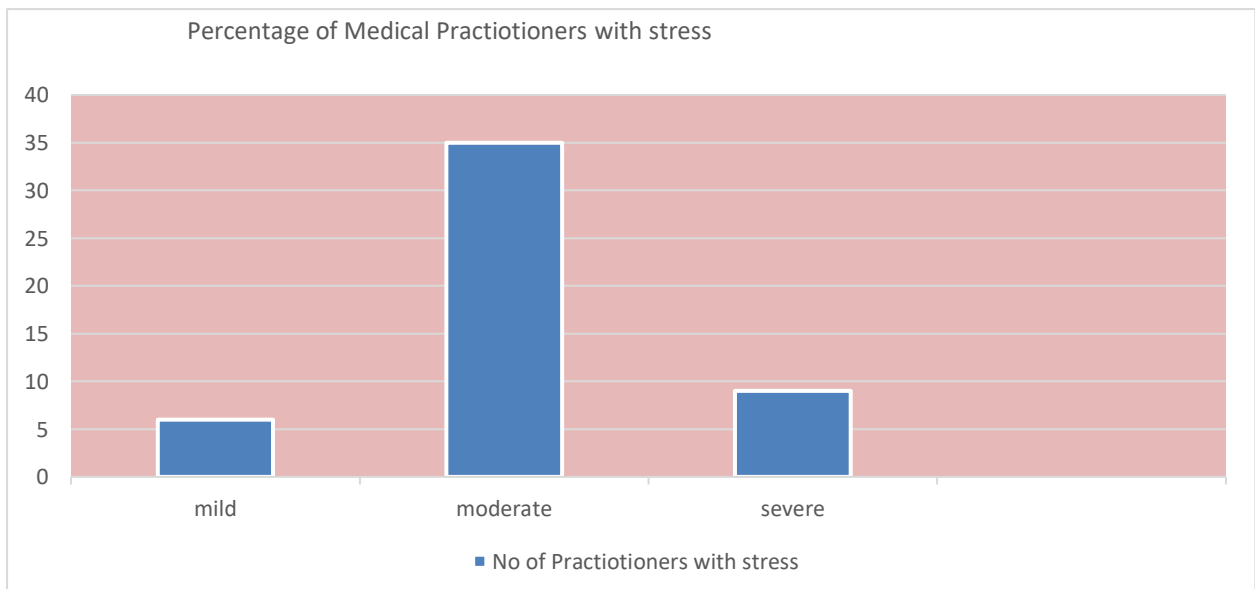


In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?

55 responses



Sr No	Stress Level by Perceived Stress Scale	No. of Medical Practitioners	Percentage
1	Mild Stress(0-13)	06	12%
2	Moderate stress(14-26)	35	70%
3	Severe stress (27-40)	09	18%



DISCUSSION

Stress is a normal part of life. Lazarus and Folkman in 1984 defined stress as “an internal state which can be caused by physical demands on the body (disease conditions, exercise, extremes of temperature and the like) or by environmental and social situations which are evaluated as potentially harmful, uncontrollable or exceeding our resources for coping”^[9]. It is a natural response to an external pressure that disrupts your equilibrium. It often causes symptoms such as Sadness, confusion, irritability, anger, uneasiness, and suicidal thoughts, Reduced concentration, efficiency, and productivity, Social withdrawal and isolation, Interpersonal problems, Tension, Body pain, Reduced energy), sleeping problems. The first important step to manage the stress, is to recognize that it is there^[9].

Using Perceived Stress scale from Indian doctors working in COVID Hospitals during Second Wave of the COVID-19 lockdown, we found that there was statistically significant increases in stress over this period. Our findings suggest that stress increased during the lockdown among medical practitioners working in COVID in Maharashtra (India). Of 60 practitioners studied, 55 responded for the Google form. Of those 06 people (12%) scored below 13, showed to be in Mild stress, 35 (70%) practitioners were scored between (13-26) that is in moderate stress and 09 (18%) practitioners scored above 26 that means those were in severe stress. Data indicates that majority of practitioners are moderate stress. Nevertheless, the increase in the adverse psychological outcomes could be because of several reasons. First, The severity of infection and aggression of disease was more than first wave of COVID also limitations of Resources to tackle the emergencies aggravated must have stress on doctors working and facing such difficulties. A steep increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in the country despite of vaccinations must have increased stress, over time. Also secondly, during this wave although severity was high but seriousness was also low among all the people which has changed the “working followed by isolation protocols” for the doctors, that increased family exposure for COVID may have contributed to stress in doctors. However, these findings of our study are contrary to those found by Wang et al. ^[8] in China, where stress and anxiety were found to be stable across 4 weeks of lockdown. The explanation provided by Wang et al. highlights that China recorded substantial improvements in curbing the spread of the virus due to their rapid decisive measures and the greater number of recovered patients. This might have instilled greater confidence in their public health measures among the Chinese, thus avoiding a worsening of the psychological toll of a prolonged lockdown.

CONCLUSION

So, we conclude that, Second wave of Covid 19 may be one of the strong reason for increased stress in Medical Practitioners working in Covid Hospitals.

Limitations of the study

In this study we have not considered about various other factors that contribute to stress in doctors like familial factors, Gender, interpersonal relationships. Also doctors in this study are not working in similar working conditions in various covid hospitals. Sample considered in this study was also limited, improvement could be done after consideration of all above factors.

Assessment of Stress amongst Medical Practitioners During COVID-19 Second Wave: An Observational Study

REFERENCES

1. Kandel N., Chungong S., Omaar A., and Xing J., "Health security capacities in the context of COVID-19 outbreak: an analysis of International Health Regulations annual report data from 182 countries," *Lancet*, vol. 395, no. 10229, pp. 1047–1053, Mar. 2020, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)30553-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30553-5) PMID: 32199075
2. Government of India, "Departmental Order Letter, DO number- 40-3/2020-DM-I(A), Dated 24th March," in Government of India, 2020, p. 1, Accessed: Jun. 10, 2020. [Online]. https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/DOletter_secretary.pdf.
3. A. J. Sharma and M. A. Subramanyam, "Psychological impact of COVID-19 lockdown in India: Different strokes for different folks," *medRxiv*, 2020.
4. Roy D., Tripathy S., Kar S. K., Sharma N., Verma S. K., and Kaushal V., "Study of knowledge, attitude, anxiety & perceived mental healthcare need in Indian population during COVID-19 pandemic," *Asian J. Psychiatr.*, vol. 51, Jun. 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajp.2020.102083> PMID: 32283510
5. Rahul Krishna P., Undela K., and Palaksha S., "Knowledge and Beliefs of General Public of India on COVID-19: A Web-based Cross-sectional Survey Self-Medication Practices among people living with Type 2 Diabetes in India View project PRODRUGS View project,"
6. Chakraborty K. and Chatterjee M., "Psychological impact of COVID-19 pandemic on general population in West Bengal: A cross-sectional study," *Indian J. Psychiatry*, vol. 62, no. 3, p. 266, 2020, https://doi.org/10.4103/psychiatry.indianjpsychiatry_276_20 PMID: 32773869
7. Cohen, S., Kamarck, T., and Mermelstein, R. (1983). A global measure of perceived stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 24, 386-396
8. Wang C. et al., "A longitudinal study on the mental health of general population during the COVID-19 epidemic in China," *Brain. Behav. Immun.*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bbi.2020.04.028> PMID: 32298802
9. Introduction to psychology, 7th edition by Morgan, Emotion & stress, pg. 321 ISBN-13: 978-0-07-462250-6

Acknowledgement

The author appreciates all the medical practitioners who contributed to this study despite of their busy schedule.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Joshi A. & Patangankar J. (2021). Assessment of Stress amongst Medical Practitioners During COVID-19 Second Wave: An Observational Study. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 9(2), 1486-1492. DIP:18.01.152.20210902, DOI:10.25215/0902.152