

Level of Stress and Coping Strategies Among Primi Postnatal Mothers in Selected Hospital at Mangalore

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ABSTRACT

Background: Motherhood is a period of transition, which brings a total change in the lives of women. The period after woman gives birth is a potentially stressful time during which she must face dramatic changes and new demands.

Objective:

- To assess the level of stress and the coping strategies among primi postnatal mothers
- To find out the correlation between level of stress and coping strategies among primi post-natal mothers

Methods: A non-experimental, descriptive research design with cross sectional survey approach was used for the present study. The sample consisted of 50 primi postnatal mothers, selected by non-probability purposive sampling technique. Data was collected through stress scale and a checklist on positive coping strategies which was developed by the authors. The correlation between stress and coping strategies was assessed by using Karl- Pearson Correlation coefficient. Chi-square test was used to find the association between level of stress and coping with selected demographic variables.

Results: The study result revealed that all postnatal mothers experienced stress. 56% of participants had moderate stress, 34% experienced severe stress, 8% experienced mild level of stress and 2% had very severe stress. The present study found that there was weak negative correlation between coping strategies and stress scores ($r = -0.48$, $p < 0.05$, $df = 48$). There was no significant association between the demographic variables and stress score. The results also showed that there was significant association between coping score and source of health information and there was no significant association between coping score and other demographic variables. The study showed that there was a negative correlation between the coping strategies and the stress ($r = -0.48$, $p < 0.05$, $df = 48$).

Conclusion: During the transition to motherhood new mothers experience a variety of concerns that have the potential to affect their attainment of the maternal role. The study shows that adopting positive coping strategies reduces the stress level of new mothers.

Keywords: Level of Stress; Coping strategies; Primi postnatal mothers;

Introduction

Pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period provide women with one of the most stressful and anxiety producing life situation that they will ever experience. Overwhelming physical and hormonal changes are coupled with sleep deprivation, new responsibilities and a new identity, which makes up to 80% of women experience some emotional stress after the birth of a new child. Stress and anxiety after giving birth is very common. Usually after giving birth many women suffer stress and anxiety because of the decreasing hormonal levels and the pressures of being a mom, especially for first time mothers.² Postnatal period is the period with increased vulnerability to psychiatric illness if the mother fails to adopt positive coping strategies. In one of the most frequently cited studies of postpartum psychiatric illnesses, described a dramatic increase in number of psychiatric hospitalizations is during first 3 months after delivery.³ This study aimed to assess the level of stress and coping strategies of primi postnatal mothers.

Methods

- **Design:** Cross sectional Descriptive survey
- **Setting:** Government Lady Goschen Hospital, Mangalore, Karnataka
- **Participants:** 50 primi postnatal mothers, selected by purposive sampling
- **Tools:** Self-reported Postpartum stress scale and Check list on positive coping strategies of primi postnatal mothers.
- **Framework:** Stuart Stress Adaptation Model
- **Analysis:** Descriptive statistics, Chi-square, and Karl-Pearson's correlation
- **Results**
 - **Level of stress:** 56% moderate, 34% severe, 8% mild, 2% very severe
 - **Level of coping:** 70% moderate, 22% poor, 8% good,
 - There was negative correlation ($r = -0.48$, $p < 0.05$) between stress of the primi postnatal mothers and their coping strategies. This indicates that as stress increases the score on coping decreases.
 - No association between mean stress score and selected demographic variables
 - There was significant association between coping score and source of health information, whereby no association between mean coping score and other demographic variables

Discussion

The study revealed the existence of significant stress among prim postnatal mothers and adopting positive coping strategies are necessary to reduce the stress. Similar findings were reported by study in Britain on primi mothers' stress during postpartum period. The greatest stress was related to baby care in a manner that 63% about feeding and 47% about baby behavior and all mothers had experienced stress.^[5]

Conclusion

The study provided the deeper insight about stress and coping strategies of primi postnatal mothers. This involves several adjustment processes as other major life transitions, such as going through puberty, getting married, or changing career directions. Yet postpartum health has gone largely unaddressed by researchers, clinicians, and women themselves.

Recommendations

- The findings of the study could be made use by all the nursing and medical personnel and allied sciences.
- Regular educational and practical sessions by midwives could be encouraged to improve knowledge and skill in maternal and child health.
- The staff nurses could be skilled in practising the counselling programme according to needs arises.
- Educate the family members about the changes occurring in the postnatal mothers and advised them to provide adequate support from all sources.

Limitations

- The present study was limited to only 50 primi postnatal mothers.
- The study was limited to government hospital there by restricting the generalization of the findings.
- The data was collected from only the postnatal mothers who could read or write Kannada or English.

References

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