

Improving Psychosocial Working Environment in Tertiary Care Hospital

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ABSTRACT

Background: There is an enormous need to improve the psychosocial working environment in hospitals for the better organizational outcome. Deranged Working environment in a hospital is one of the major factors which decrease the productivity of employees and can cause major discrepancies amongst the healthcare workers. With this background, a study was carried out in a tertiary care hospital in Bangalore for a period of six months, from February 2019 to July 2019 which was cross sectional and descriptive in nature. The study aimed to assess factors which affect psychosocial work environment in a hospital and recommend strategies to improve the same. The data collection was carried out through a structured questionnaire which contained seven parameters i.e., job demand, workload, work organization, empowerment, health and well being, social support, interpersonal relations and professional and personal development. A pilot study was carried out to check the reliability of the questionnaire for 20 samples. Pie charts and bar diagrams were used to interpret the results. Furthermore, through the obtained results, key problem areas were identified and focus group discussions were conducted to analyze the reasons for compromised psychosocial status. The results demonstrated the major problems faced by the employees, which were, dealing with nervousness under pressure, high workload, reduced freedom at work, emotionally demanding work-life etc. It was observed that, 55% of administrative staffs have more stress levels in comparison with paramedics having 47%, followed by nurses and doctors with 42% and 36% respectively. This gives a different perspective to the study in comparison with the previous studies that focused only on doctors and nurses. Secondly, by analyzing the key problematic areas it was observed that there were major issues related to workload, social support, and health and well being. Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that the hospital needs to improve on resolving the workload issues, providing empowerment at work, developing strategies to promote health and well-being, increasing social support and developing policies for absence management and mental health promotion.

Key words: Psychosocial, Working environment, Psychosocial factors, Hospital

1. INTRODUCTION

Psychosocial work environment pertains to interpersonal and social interactions that influence behavior and development in the workplace. Psychosocial Work Environment as which includes the organization of work and the organizational culture the attitudes, values, beliefs and practices that are demonstrated on a daily basis in the enterprise /organization, and which affect the mental and physical well-being of employees [1]. Healthy work environment is important for the overall health of healthcare workers, for successful healthcare workers recruitment and retention, and for the quality and safety of patient care and in turn the organizational effectiveness.

1.1 Contributing factors

In the working environment, a number of negative, potentially health-related psychosocial factors have been identified in numerous studies. These include the under utilization of abilities, work overload, lack of control, role conflict, job demand, inequity of pay, lack of job security, problems in relationships at work, shift work and physical danger.

1.2 Need of the study

There has been a growing recognition that the experience of psychosocial hazards at work has detrimental effects on the health and well-being of employees, as well as on the workplace productivity and profits. Issues such as work-related stress, bullying, and stress due to harassment have grown in prominence in recent years in response to a number of factors such as overwork, job insecurity, low levels of job satisfaction, and lack of autonomy [2] These hazards are highly underestimated in most of the workplaces because of the difficulties involved with their detection and management and eventually represent risks to physical and psychological health. Reducing this huge burden from unhealthy workplaces is a formidable challenge for national governments, health policy makers, and practitioners. The growing burden of psychosocial hazards at workplace has guided to review the literature on the effective approaches to improve psychosocial

work environment.

1.3 Current Burden

- Healthy work environment is important for the overall health of healthcare workers, for successful healthcare workers recruitment and retention, and for the quality and safety of patient care and in turn the organizational effectiveness.
- Studying the work environment has considerably gained the attention of global leaders recently because of its huge burden imposed in the health care organization due to critical factors like nursing shortage, provision of quality care and patient safety issues.
- As of today acute shortage of nurses is the biggest problem faced by health administrators across the globe. India too faces shortage of nurses. The nurse to population/patient ratio in India is very low compared to other countries.
- The nurse to population ratio found in India stood at 0.80 nurses per 1000 whereas it is 1:100- 150 in Europe. Consequently, healthcare organizations must find creative ways to improve and Nurses working environment determines a range of nurse patient and organizational outcome [3].

2. MATERIALS and METHODS

2.1 Aim and Objectives

The aim of the study is to assess factors which affect psychosocial work environment and recommend strategies to improve the psychosocial working environment.

The study deals with four major objectives i.e. (a) to identify the factors which affect psychosocial working environment in healthcare workers (b) To assess the existing psychosocial status of the healthcare workers in the hospital (c) To analyze the reasons for compromised psychosocial working

environment in the hospital (d) To recommend strategies to improve the psychosocial working environment

2.2 Questionnaire:

A detailed questionnaire was developed by adapting from literature reviews. Questions were divided into 2 parts that were socio-demographic profile and 7 parameters. Multiple choice questionnaires were used for socio-demographic profile, for factors towards psychosocial working environment related questionnaire Likert scale was used by assessing the levels strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree.

2.3 Target population and sampling strategies:

Target population was all the employees in the tertiary care hospital, Bangalore. The author contacted all the participants through direct contact for the study. A systematic random sampling technique was used to collect data from the employees, were every 5th employee of each department were taken.

2.4 Data collection:

Data were collected from all the employees of tertiary care hospital from different departments, such as, doctors, nurses, administrative staffs, paramedics and supportive service department. Total 300 samples were collected through survey.

2.5 Data analysis:

After sample collection reliability check was done for questionnaire with the use of Cronbach's Alpha. Data entry and analysis was done by using SPSS software and Microsoft excel.

Interpretation of data analysis was done by using of pie chart and bar diagrams. Descriptive statistics was used to describe the socio- demographic variables and other questions. The findings were organized and presented in tables and suitable figure.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Socio-demographic profile:

S.NO	Variables		Frequency	Percent
1	Gender	Male	101	33.7
		Female	199	66.3
2	Age	21 to 30	108	36
		31 to 40	138	46
		More than 40	54	18
3	Marital Status	Married	227	75.7
		Single	73	24.3
4	Highest education level	Till class 12	61	20.3
		Graduate	169	56.3
		Post graduate	55	18.3
		Phd	15	5
5	Nationality	Indian	298	99.3
		Foreigner	2	0.7
6	Religion	Hindu	249	83
		Christian	35	11.7
		Islam	14	4.7
		Buddhism	2	7
7	Type of Job	Administrative staff	74	24.7
		Doctors	49	16.3
		Nurses	83	27.7
		Paramedic staff	71	23.7
		Supportive service staff	23	7.7

Table no 3.1 Percentage distribution of socio demographic profile of the respondents

Parameters	Good	Neutral	Poor
Job demand	50%	3.40%	46.50%
Work organization	81.30%	3.40%	15.26%
Work load	54.72%	3.94%	41.32%
Knowledge and development	92%	2%	4.16%
Support and interpersonal relations	80.52%	3.42%	16.40%
Health and well-being	31.18%	4.08%	64.74%
Leadership and empowerment	68.70%	5.35%	26.01%

Table no 3.2 Overall percentages of psychosocial status

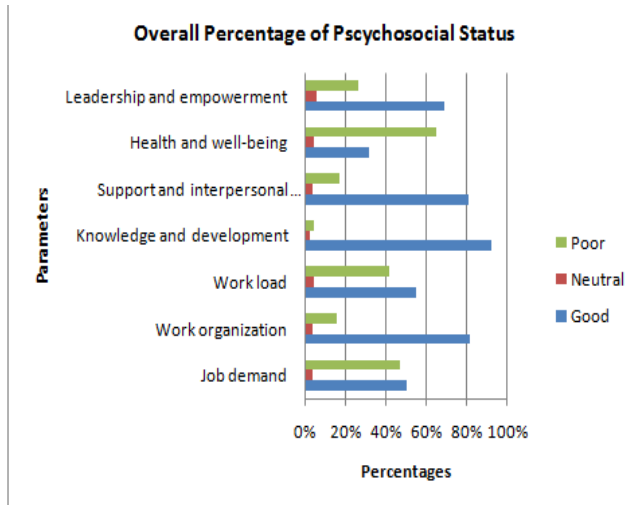


Figure no 3.2 Overall percentages of psychosocial status

After the entire analysis the overall results of all the parameters it can be concluded that there are major problems faced by the employees while dealing with nervousness under pressure, high workload, reduced freedom at work, emotionally demanding work-life etc. As shown in the figure 3.2 it can be clearly observed that, 55% of administrative staffs have psychosocial problems and more stress levels in comparison with paramedics having 47%, followed by nurses and doctors with 36% and 34% respectively. This gives a different perspective to the study in comparison the previous studies that focused only on doctors and nurses.

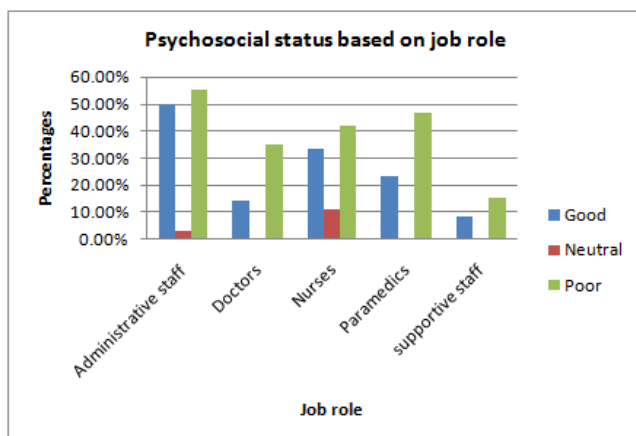


Figure no 3.3 Comparison of job role with parameter

In figure no 3.2 it can easily observed that, 55% of

administrative staffs have psychosocial problems and more stress levels in comparison with paramedics having 47%, followed by nurses and doctors with 42% and 36% respectively. This gives a different perspective to the study in comparison the previous studies that focused only on doctors and nurses.

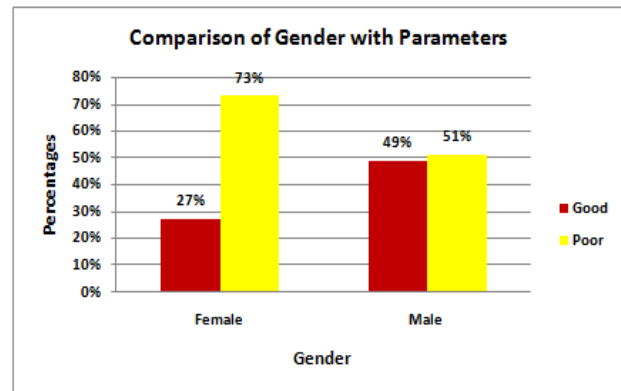


Figure no 3.4 Comparison of gender with parameter

In figure no 3.3 shows that comparing to the male employee's Female employees have high percentage of i.e. 73% of stress level and male employees have 51% of stress level with this result the study can conclude that female employees are affecting more by this poor psychosocial environment.

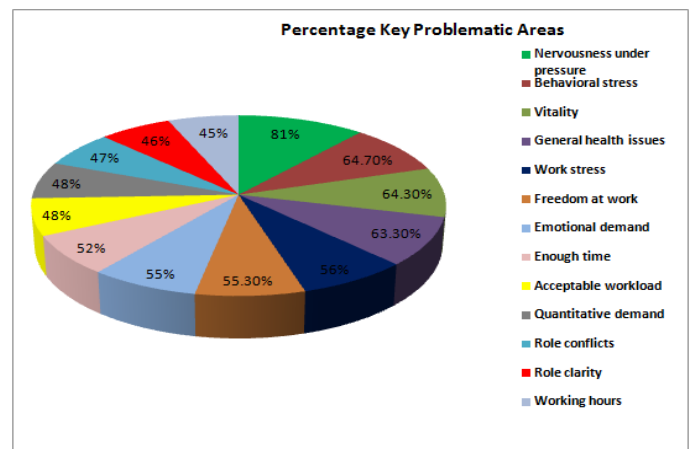


Figure no 3.5 Percentage of key problematic areas

By analyzing the key problematic areas it was observed that there were major issues related to workload, social support and health and well being. Based on the entire analysis it can be concluded that the hospital needs to improve on resolving the workload issues, proving empowerment at work, developing

strategies to promote health and well-being, increasing social support and developing policies for absence management and mental health promotion.

4. DISCUSSION

After the entire analysis it is clear that there certain key issues i.e. nervousness under pressure, high workload, work stress, general health within in the organization. The study used total 39 variables for the questionnaire in that study found 14 variables have more problems. Since the psychosocial issue is in the hands of the hospital and the staffs they should maintain the interpersonal relations, workload adjustment and they need to improve the leadership qualities to prevent these issues. The next most crucial area which needs improvement is the staffs health and well being because if the staffs are not good in their health and wealth which may affect staff performance as well as organization. The study carried out on “Assessment of Professional stress levels among healthcare workers” [4], this study didn’t include all the healthcare workers but the study which was conducted in tertiary care hospital includes all the employees of hospital i.e. Doctors, nurses, paramedics, administrative staffs and supportive staffs.

In another study "Psychosocial Work Environment, Stress Factors and Individual Characteristics among Nursing Staff in Psychiatric"[1] the purpose was to investigate perceptions of the psychosocial work environment among nursing staff in psychiatric in-patient care and how individual characteristics. This study mainly discussed about psychosocial issues, the nurses specially whoever working in psychiatric department. The past studies proved that the nurses and doctors have a high stress level because of this psychosocial issue. In our study proved that apart from doctors and nurses other healthcare workers both clinical and nonclinical they are also struggling with these psychosocial problems. The main purpose of the study is to improve the psychosocial working environment within the organization. To assess existing psychosocial status in the organization the factors and variables are identified to prepare questionnaire. Psychosocial working environment assessment questionnaires prepared by

using of (COPSOQ) questionnaire tool and survey about psychosocial work environment. The analysis of questionnaires is done by using of SPSS software. Interpretation is showed by using of pie diagram and bar graphs. After the entire analysis of questionnaire problematic areas are identified. In that administrative staffs has more stress level compare to the other healthcare workers. By using of this problematic area checklist were formulated to analyze why the staffs are affecting more by this issues and to identify what solution or strategies they need, to prevent this psychosocial working environment problems. Based on this entire analysis, results and focus group discussion recommendation and framework were formulated.

5. RECOMMENDATION

1. Working Environment

- Assess work environment regularly by observing the work and by interviewing employees
- Psychosocial risk assessment should be carried out periodically to examine aspects of the job that could cause harm and injury within the organization

2. Interpersonal relationship at work

- Social and emotional support from co-workers and supervisor
- Maintain fair treatment within in the organization

3. Absenteeism

- Develop and implement absence management policy
- Train and provide managers with advice and assistance in handling difficult absence issues

4. Other employees’ behavior (erratic behavior, depression)

- Develop and implement an early intervention stress management policy
- Provide training in coping skills and individual stress management
- Promotion of mental health example yoga

5. Organizational culture and function

- Engaging of right employees to right job

- Provision of periodical feedback to staff to improve their performance

6. CONCLUSION

“Psychosocial Work Environment as which includes the organization of work and the organizational culture; the attitudes, values, beliefs and practices that are demonstrated on a daily basis in the enterprise /organization, and which affect the mental and physical well-being of employees”. There is broad recognition that the psychosocial environment at work can affect physical and mental health as well as organizational outcomes such as work performance and effectiveness. Participation by health care workers and action plans targeting problematic aspects of the psychosocial work environment are key elements in interventions to improve their health. However, such interventions present challenges, such as the involvement of managers, involvement of all relevant participants, and re-establishment of trust within work teams. Recognition and respect must be re-established, and supervisors must engage with health care workers and give support at all stages of the intervention.

The study shown that adverse workplace factors can increase in risk of ill health in healthcare workers. By studying the psychosocial working environment from 300 staffs, the major error areas and gaps were brought out for which bar and pie diagram was plotted.

The main gaps which need improvement are the minimizing the multi work task, reduction of workload by increasing the manpower and manual documentation (paper work) by adopting EHR. Other important improvements which are needed to take into the consideration are staffs health and well being. There will a lot of improvement in the social support and fair treatment by eliminating these gaps. After the entire analysis the study gave some strategies which can be applied for the improvements. In that checklist all the

problematic areas were noted based on that reasons for the psychosocial issues are captured. With this background strategies are formulated for the psychosocial working environment improvement in hospital.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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