JOB STRESS AMONG DOCTORS IN J&K - AN ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Stress is a critical phenomenon. It is a very subjective experience. It is based on experiences, temperament and environmental conditions. At a crucial stage of health care, India is at an inflexion point of breakdown of employees due to intermittent stress. The jobs high paying come up with a price of high targets resulting towards high job pressure. This leads to work relates stress which are caused due to high work demands which exceeds person’s capacity also leading to factors which make it difficult for the employees to cope up the pressure. The same pressure can be attributing to doctors as Indian healthcare is growing at an intermittent rate of 15% annually. As per medical council of India there are 9.29 Lakh doctors registered in India. With 80% average doctor availability, only 7.14 Lakh doctors may be available at any given point of time in the country. This number is both alarming and shocking as this leads to ratio of 1: 654 doctor patient ratio in country. This ratio is way below the 1:1000 doctor patient ratios as benchmarked by World Health Organization (WHO). This paper intends to measure the prevalence of job stress among doctors working in different hospitals of Jammu and Kashmir. The study is quantitative and descriptive in its nature. For the purpose of study, both secondary and primary data have been collected with the help of structured and closed - ended questionnaire from randomly selected 600 doctors working in government run hospital in Srinagar and Jammu city.

Key words: Doctors; Stress; occupational stressors;
INTRODUCTION

Stress is a part of life and is generated by constantly changing situations that a person must face. Stress may be referred to as an unpleasant state of emotional and physiological arousal that people experience in situations that they perceive as dangerous or threatening to their well-being.

Stress at workplace reduces workers satisfaction, productivity, increase absenteeism and turnover (Gianakos, 2001) and organizations suffer a huge financial loss (Badran Abdulrahman Al-Omar, 2003). Stress is a critical phenomenon. It is a very subjective experience. It is based on the experiences, temperament and environmental conditions. Not just individual stress creates a disturbance in a professional’s personal life as well.

As explained by Hans Seyle, who is also known as the father of modern stress, stress is defined as a non-specific response those stimuli in the body which is also known as the noxious stimuli. The stress is thus caused by the excessive energy demand on the body which exceeds his adjustive resources (Lazarus, (1976)). According to Richard Carlson, stress is a mental illness which is socially accepted and can lead to strain and depression to a human body. This stress can occur to an individual either in his workplace or at his residence where he might be overloaded with work and is in constant pressure to meet the expectations. This stress is also referred to as work stress or occupational stress. However, most psychologists regard stress as a process involving a person’s interpretation and response to a threatening event.

Indian healthcare is at a critical juncture, as it focuses on pertinent issues of consumerism, cost effectiveness and quality. Indian healthcare is annually growing at the rate of 15% which is faster than most of the other service sectors. Stress in workplace has become an increasingly hot topic over the past few decades. Stress in the workplace reduces productivity, increases management pressures and makes people ill in many ways, evidence of which is still increasing. Workplace stress affects the performance of the brain, including functions of work performance memory, concentration and learning.

Today’s organizational life is characterized by stress and strain. Employees experience stress at work that has negative consequences both to the individual and the organization. Stress at workplace is of the major cause injuries which happen to people working across the globe (Iglehart, 2000). The major chuck of these injuries is caused to healthcare professional, mostly doctors who work in intermittent shifts and in unsafe environment which causes them from moderate to serious injury (Grunfeld and others, 2000; Gundersen, 2001). This work-related stress and injury can have a negative
effect in a medical professional’s personal as well as professional life. With lack of quality of sleep, round the clock presence, issues like depression, hypertension and isolation is common problem seen among doctors (Klein and others, 2011).

In any profession, job satisfaction should be paramount and imperative for someone to give best results at his work place (Vanden and others, 2008; Van-Dijk and Swaen, 2003). Job satisfaction plays a vital role in improving the quality of life of the citizens and can augment the lifestyle of any individual to good (Bovier and Perneger, 2003). Exhaustion related to stress, poor sleep quality and extremely difficult work schedule pays a key role in any individual’s job satisfaction (Gray-Toft and Anderson, 1985). Studies have shown that in regions where doctors and medical professionals are satisfied with their jobs and have high job satisfaction rate, have reported less cases of diseases and intermittent injuries (Bovier and Perneger, 2003; Haas and others, 2000; Judge and others, 2001; Kivikami and others, 1994; Verschuren and Masselink, 1997).

Stress, fatigue, burn out and depression have caused permanent psychological effects on doctors which have taken a negative impact on their health and relationship (Fahrenpf and others, 2008). Studies conducted not just in US but also in Middle East and data available from conservative societies like King of Saudi Arabia have revealed the trend but due to lack to penetrative communication and conservative approach concrete results could not be inferenced from these regions.

THEORITICAL FRAMWORK

Schular. R. S. (1980) defines “Stress as a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint or demand related to what he or she desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important”.

Selye (1979) defines it as “The non-specific response of the body to any demand made upon it”. Stress leads to various Physiological, psychological and behavioural difficulties. It affects the health of employees. It causes various psychological problems like anger, depression, anxiety, irritability and tension. Job stress can be defined as “The physical and psychological reactions an individual-experiences, resulting from a poor fit between the job demands and the individual’s capabilities” (Jamal, 1985).

Organizational and individual stress can be attributed as the main driver if job stress among employees. Main reason of job stress includes ambiguity of roles and responsibility, erratic behavior of the boss or superintendent, unclear and ambiguous key requirement areas, unprecedented job targets.
A study conducted by Yang, Che and Spector in 2008 observed that main cause of job stress includes the continuous widening gap between the perceived and actual job conditions. This results into intermittent strain among employees leading to overall dissatisfaction about their job and the work they do.

Since ages it has been seen and observed that more the employees are motivated, the better they perform and higher the chances of them succeeding in their current job role. Motivation is the De facto reason for any employee to work for a longer period in any organization. It can be perceived as an effective instrument for any employer to get the best from their employees and at the same time bring the best from them. According to Dalton E. Farland (1974), “The way in which urges, desires, aspirations, striving or needs direct, control or explain the behaviour of human beings”. Motivation not only improves job motivation and productivity; it is one of the most important driving factors for an employee to come to office on day on day basis. As per Robins (1988) “The willingness to exert high levels of efforts to reach organization goals, conditioned by the efforts ability to satisfy some individual needs”.

Biggest management schools have stressed on the importance of motivation in order to achieve a positive relationship among the employee’s performance and efficiency. Employees with low motivation will always be unsatisfied and organizations with low motivation will be prone to higher attrition. For any organization to create a long-term value, it needs to have highly motivated employees who stay with the organization for a longer period of time. Companies and organizations with hyper hiring and firing stages will be more prone to financial as well as the value decimation. (Ramlall, 2004).

A study conducted by Herzberg in 1987 revealed that although motivation is a psychological aspect and have been of little consideration so far, it can have a major impact in an employee’s overall performance in the organization. The study revealed that any organization can hire an employee by offering him a higher salary but to bring in the best from the same one needs to keep the employee motivated. Salary can be attributed as an external motivation factor while high enthusiasm and motivation are the internal motivation factor. An assumption on the finding observed that that an employee might have high inclination to high salary while choosing a job, long term stay in the organization totally depends on its internal motivation.

As per Karasek (1979), an employee pushed for a job will never perform full to his potential in case he is not internally motivated. Companies like HomeworkGuru.com are working with corporates
to motivate their employees and bring the best out of them while at work. Corporate trainings are conducted on a regular basis to achieve these tasks.

Long and Porter (1984) point out, the psychological consequences of role stress depends not only on the number of roles occupied but also on the nature of particular roles, because roles differ in social value and in the patterning of privileges and obligations associated with them. An investigation into such differences has both personal as well as social significance. In India, this area is comparatively uninvestigated as yet (Pareek and Mehta, 1983).

**Transactional theories of work-related stress**

The most commonly used transactional theory suggests that stress is the direct product of a transaction between an individual and their environment which may tax their resources and thus threaten their wellbeing (Lazarus 1986, Lazarus and Folkman 1987). Yet a more recent version of this theoretical model suggests that it is the appraisal of this transaction that offers a causal pathway that may better express the nature of the underlying psychological and physiological mechanisms which underpin the overall process and experience of stress (Lazarus et al. 2001).

In this sense, any aspect of the work environment can be perceived as a stressor by the appraising individual. Yet the individual appraisal of demands and capabilities can be influenced by a number of factors, including personality, situational demands, coping skills, pervious experiences, time lapse, and any current stress state already experienced (Prem et al. 2017). One multidisciplinary review provides a broad consensus that stressors really only exert their effects through how an individual perceives and evaluates them (Ganster and Rosen 2013).

As such, the experience of workplace stress according to the transactional theory is associated with exposure to particular workplace scenarios, and a person’s appraisal of a difficulty in coping. This experience is usually accompanied by attempts to cope with the underlying problem and by changes in psychological functioning, behaviour and function (Aspinwall and Taylor 1997, Guppy and Weatherstone 1997). In order to recognise these external and internal elements of workplace stress, Cox (1993) outlined another modified transactional theory. This theory represented the sources of the stressor, the perceptions of those stressors in relation to his/her ability to cope, the psychological and physiological changes associated with the recognition of stress arising, including perceived ability to cope, the consequences of coping, and all general feedback that occurs during this process.
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Study Design
The design of this study was a quantitative, multi-center, cross-sectional, correlational study where questionnaires were administered to randomly selected participants.

Research Questions
Doctors job characteristics (professional group, years of work experience, work load, whether she/he work night shifts or weekends, time spent with family and friends, whether she/he believes there is inadequate staff to do the job, and whether she/he was exposed to a stressful event outside of work within a year) has made them stressed and does have an impact on their life.

Objectives:
1. To study occupational stressors in order to understand the nature, level and cause of stress of doctors
2. To study and analyze the relationship between job stress and work motivation.

HYPOTHESIS

- Doctors have high level of stress which has an impact on their personal, profession and social life.

SAMPLE OF THE STUDY
The study is quantitative and descriptive in its nature. For the purpose of study, primary data have been collected with the help of structured and closed-ended questionnaire from randomly selected 600 doctors working in government run hospital in Srinagar and Jammu city. The sample of the study was of representative type. A serious attempt was made to give representation to all the variables such as demography, age, sex, education, Income, social status and marital status. All the variables were selected purposefully in order to: i): to give representation to all concerned groups and sub groups in the sample. ii): to get the maximum required information / data on specific themes/topics.
Sample distribution:

- Gender: Half of the respondents interviewed were female and another half of the respondents were male.
- Age: The age group of the respondents were 25-30, 31-60, above 60
- Marital status: The respondents interviewed included married and unmarried respondents.
- Experience: The experience of respondents was 1-5, 6-10, and above 10 years who were interviewed

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Workplace stress can lead to poor health and work-related injuries (Iglehart, 2000). Health care professionals comprise an important group that can be impacted by workplace stress because of their unique work environment (Grunfeld and others, 2000; Gundersen, 2001). In health care, employee job stress can have a negative impact on the quality of patient care (Bovier and Perneger, 2003; Demir and others, 2007). Among this group, studies have found various causes of stress, including varied
working hours, heavy work load, night shifts resulting in sleep deprivation, imbalance between work and life, isolated feelings, and minimal control over the workplace accompanied by minimal autonomy (Klein and others, 2011).

Job satisfaction in workers is imperative, stimulating productivity as well as quality of work (Vanden and others, 2008; Van-Dijk and Swaen, 2003). Among health care workers, job satisfaction has a great impact on work quality and efficiency, including health care costs (Bovier and Perneger, 2003). Stress, exhaustion, and difficult work shifts which cause job stress also influence job satisfaction (Gray-Toft and Anderson, 1985). Studies showed that job satisfaction among health care workers is influenced by many factors, including sex, age, level of education, work experience, working conditions, salary, working hours, and the possibility of promotion (Bovier and Perneger, 2003; Haas and others, 2000; Judge and others, 2001; Kivikami and others, 1994; Verschuren and Masselink, 1997).

Swanson and Power (1999) conducted a comparative study between perceived stress, satisfaction, and conflict for male and female doctors. The study revealed that male doctors were more stressed and dissatisfied than females. The study of Hirak Dasgupta and Suresh Kumar (2009) also found that there was no difference between the stress levels among male and female doctors except in the case of the factors like inter-role distance and role inadequacy. And of these factors, the stress level among female doctors is much more than male.

Based on the literature review factors causing stress among doctors were identified. The interrelations between factors of stress and stress were supported by the previous studies.

The study of Aarti G Sahasrabuddhe et.al (2015) reported that heavy work-load with long duty hours, poor accommodation and food, low stipend and lack of social and family life created stress among residence doctors of Mumbai. Burden of work, extended duty hours and, poor hostel facilities were also emerged as stressors in the study of Rajan and Bellare et.al (2011); of tertiary care Municipal hospital’s resident doctors in Mumbai.

A British Medical Association (BMA) report (2000) showed that many senior doctors suffer high levels of stress. Work was the main stressor which directly hampers their ability to provide high-quality care to patients. Spurgeon et. al (2005) in a study on stress among Government hospitals found that
older medical doctors were more stressed as compared to younger doctors with new work demands and unrealistic patient demands was the factor of stress which caused more stress among younger doctors.

Nadia Ayub (2011) studied the relationship between work motivation and job satisfaction. The was undertaken with nine sub scales namely pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingency rewards, operating conditions, coworkers, nature of work and communication. The study showed that there was positive relationship between work motivation and job satisfaction. The result highlighted that managers felt motivated by good work environment with colleagues, interesting assignments, feedback as well as compensation as money. The result also indicated that there was a significant gender difference on variables of work motivation.

One of the pioneer theories of motivation is Herzberg (1959) two-factor theory, in this theory, there are two factors governing motivation, which are satisfaction and dissatisfaction which are not two opposite extremes of the same continuum but two separate entities caused by quite different facets of work. These facets of work are labeled hygiene factors and motivators. Hygiene factors are characterized as the extrinsic components of job design that contribute to employee dissatisfaction if they are not fulfilled. These include supervision, working conditions, company policies, salaries and employee relations. On the other hand, motivators are intrinsic to the job itself include aspects such as achievement, development, responsibilities and recognition. These intrinsic factors are determinants of motivation (Furnham, Eracleous & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2009).

Both dimensions of the two-factor model of Herzberg (1987) do not only contribute to the level of motivation, but can also be related to the perceived stress of employees. Trying to motivate people with hygiene factors, for example pushing people to goals by promising bonuses, will result in a high level of stress. Due to the difference between the actual and preferred control over the job in combination with high job demands. If job enrichment is successfully implemented and employees are able to get internally motivated, it still can affect their perceived stress level. This result is not surprising, because by comparing motivation and stress theories it is noticeable that some factors are mentioned as both motivators and stressors, for example responsibility (Herzberg, 1987; Parker and Decotiis, 1983). Unfortunately, it is difficult to tell when the relationship between a high level of motivators and perceived stress changes from negative to positive.
MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Work plays a central role in the lives of many people, and thus the impact of occupational stress is an important issue both for individual employees and the organizations in which they work. Stress in workplace has become an increasingly hot topic over the past few decades. Stress experienced at work can have adverse outcomes for the well-being of individual employees and organization as whole. Stress in the workplace reduces productivity, increases management pressures and makes people ill in many ways, evidence of which is still increasing.

Thus, with globalization and rapid changing technology, people in most professions find themselves struggling between work and non-work life commitments; causing a work life imbalance. The profession of doctor is no exception. Doctors’ working in hospitals have exceptionally hectic lives and find it most challenging to balance the demands of medical and professional work with that of their personal, family and social lives.

To study the job stress among doctors of government hospital the researcher used the scale for Occupational Stressors during the field work and the major findings were:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Occupational Stressors</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Ineffective leadership</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Unsupportive colleagues</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Indifferent Organizational attitude</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Inadequate awareness about Profession</td>
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<td>Workload and job pressure</td>
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<td>Lack of control at work</td>
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<td>Role ambiguity</td>
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<td>Self-role conflict</td>
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1) **Ineffective Leadership Style**: It was found that management style including lack of participation by workers in decision making, poor communication in the organisation and lack of family-friendly policies contribute to work stress. However, all leaders were not equal; some leaders were stress carriers, while some were stress relievers. Kang and Singh (2006) recognized ‘inconsiderate superior’ as a severe source of stress, being biased, critical and unhelpful. Thus, it was suggested by respondents that superior should offer maximum intrinsic motivators to the subordinate in order to encourage him.

2) **Unsupportive Colleagues**: National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (1999) has recognized interpersonal relations, viz., poor social environment and lack of support or help from colleagues and superiors, as a cause of work stress. It was found during fieldwork, poor
interpersonal relations of employees with their colleagues can be a leading source of stress among them. Respondents were seen in dissonant relations with colleagues and seniors as salient stressors, but found poor relations with colleagues as a more severe stressor than that of unsatisfactory relations with seniors. It was also revealed by respondents that one who shares good relations with his co-workers is less prone to stress, since in stressful circumstances he/ she is able to gain their support and sympathy, which help him in coping with such situations timely and thus, manage his stress.

3) **Indifferent Organizational Attitude:** Respondents revealed that organizational culture being the biggest social support moderates the relation between occupational stressors. Further, it was reported relationship problems were existing among the bosses, subordinates and peers. Furthermore, stress among doctors due to indifferent organizational support disturbing them during their working hours in hospital. Thus, deficient social support in the organisation causes stressful situations, which increase work stress. Hence, lower the level of support from the organisation, higher is the level of stress experienced by employees at work.

4) **Inadequate Training:** It was revealed that lack of training and development has several ill-effects on doctors who usually work with patients with multiple problems. Lack of training is identified as an important stress factor among junior hospital doctors. It was also expressed that sometimes due to overburden and inadequate training leads to the feeling to quit their profession. Further, poor organizational training climate also give rise to hampered personal development in terms of lack of shared experiences, lack of adequate training aids and insufficient training options.

5) **Inadequate Awareness about Profession:** Inadequate awareness about profession was seen at all levels due to which the lot of confusion was at work. Study highlighted that being uncertain about organization’s the superintendent felt constrained had self-role stress when board members are unable to present a united front due to conflicting orientations among them and thus, obtain enhanced freedom to act as they deem fit. Inadequate awareness about profession is also related to unsupportive behaviour at workplace.

6) **Workload and Job Pressure:** Study indicated high correlate on of excessive work demands with job stress. It was found the other reasons were the problem of long working hours, demands of the profession and shortage of sleep as common sources of stress among junior
doctors. Further, it was also found high work pressure and poor supervisory support to be related to heavy workload.

7) **Lack of Control at Work:** The respondents revealed that autonomy in job is an essential requirement for taking day-to-day decisions on job and a lack of empowerment leads to job stress among the employees. Thus, perceptions of lack of control on one’s work environment lead to more work stress. Since it can make the employees feel that their roles are less important.

8) **Role Ambiguity** Role ambiguity exists when direction about expectations of one’s role in the job or organisation is unclear. High role ambiguity is associated with high occupational stress. Further, association between role ambiguity and high work pressure has been established by finding of the study. Furthermore, inadequate information affects individual’s ability to perform effectively gets reduced when one is unclear about day-to-day tasks, expectations and job-related goals. Also, role ambiguity negatively effects employee’s health and job satisfaction level.

9) **Self-role Conflict:** Respondents revealed that self-role distance is experienced by the role occupant when she/he has to do what he/she dislikes or when there is a conflict between the role occupant and his perception about the image, needs and values of the role. Respondents explained role conflict as the extent to which employees have to carry out tasks, which are in conflict with their own norms and values.

10) **Unhealthy Relationships at Work:** Respondents revealed that relationships at work are an important aspect of Human Resource Management as well as work stress, affecting well-being. An atmosphere of warmth and support in the organisation is found to lower the frustration level of the employees.

11) **Domestic/Family-related Stressors:** Respondents revealed that apart from occupational stress, employees also face stressful personal life situations, which impact their health and work productivity. Maintaining a balance between family and work roles becomes problematic especially during the period of early career formation and early family formation among doctors. This work-family conflict is strongly associated with both poor health and low life satisfaction.
CONCLUSION

Workplace stress plays a significant role in physiological and psychological well-being of employees. It also affects the productivity and performance of organisations. The various results of workplace stress like physical problems, mental disturbances, emotional imbalance, lifestyle disturbances and behavioral problems lead to disturb the climate of the organisation. These issues create interpersonal conflicts, decreased productivity, low organizational commitment, increased absenteeism and more attrition etc.

Stress refers to the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or demands placed on them (Health and Safety Executive, 2004), resulting in a detectable strain, which if not accommodated by an individual and experienced for a prolonged period can ultimately result in impaired health and behavior (Pestonjee, 2000).

As per the study under current pathetic working conditions of doctors; there is an urgent need hospital to address various issues of their doctors before it goes from concern to crisis. In the western part of the globe, there is an increasing realization that medical profession must adapt more to work life balance concerns of healthcare employees. Hospitals also need to create a work culture that promotes professional and personal wellbeing of doctors and reduce competitive demands between the two domains of life. This requires a change in attitude and the capacity to suspend old paradigms. Although hospitals and government on the whole are not entirely responsible for doctors’ work life balance, health and wellbeing; still considering the fact that doctors spend more than half of their time in hospitals, these agencies need to acknowledge that some initiatives can be taken to improve their work life balance. As work life conflict and dissatisfaction among doctors’ increases around the world, this research looks at what Indian hospitals can do about this problem.

The below mentioned are the stress reduction strategies for coping up from stress:

- Recently mindfulness techniques are often included into other practices such as prayers, yoga or meditation. This helps in health benefits such as normalizing the blood pressure, treat heart disease, reduce chronic pain and improve sleeping habits. It also helps to build your ability to pay attention and increase concentration. Vacations, recreational activities, sports should be provided to employees after specific intervals to avoid the sense of isolation, sleeping disorder etc.
Stress Management Counseling is another technique to reduce stress where professional assistance and guidance is provided to trigger the personal and psychological problems. Organization should conduct a stress management workshop on a regular basis.

- Establish work schedules that are compatible with demands and responsibilities of the job.
- Ensure job rotation to avoid repetitive and monotonous work.
- There should be a clear job description and job promotion policy and paths. There should be a proper communication channel.
- Organization should provide emotional support as well as support in fulfilling tasks and other assigned responsibilities.

Focusing on performance evaluation system which helps to identify the strength and weakness of employees and then providing training accordingly. Training methods of the organization should be reformed and enhanced. It reduces the stress as well as helps in skill development to achieve the organizational goals.

Furthermore, it was found that work overload causes low stress among junior doctors [Respondent] as expressed by them during the conduct of field work. Therefore, in order to overcome the problem of training, Antoniou et al. (2003) suggested achieving a balance between theoretical and practical training by providing systematic training programmes for junior doctors, to make them well-versed with complete information and practical tasks to be carried out in future.

- There are many effective forms of meditation, and they all help with stress management. One can try a daily prayer.
- The best part of these findings suggests that doing something as simple as getting an ice cream or writing in your gratitude journal—things that put you in a better mood—can bring lasting benefits in the way of personal resilience.
- Learn how this works and make it a simple and fun part of your daily routine.
- The researcher had a serious academic attempt to analyse also the change among Medical Practitioners working in the Jammu and Kashmir State. The working conditions for them have changed in the recent past. Earlier they never worked for long hours and under conditions of turmoil, the more they work, the more they involve themselves in the stress; it affects their family in the long run and affects their physical and mental balance. Job
stress has damaging physiological and psychological effects on employee especially the Medical Practitioners; it will affect their health and their contribution to the society as doctor. Therefore, the contribution during the challenging time a hidden satisfaction remains there.

- Doctors have been one of the most fascinating fields in the state, as a result more and more people are opting for this career. Thus, a level of motivation is always there.

In view of the above stated facts this becomes necessary to study the present level of stress doctors, its consequences, causes and manifestations. At the same time, to identify factors that motivates them at work.

REFERENCES:


