Mental health of middle aged working women

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Abstract
Mental health of middle aged working women
Method: Quantitative approach using Exploratory Descriptive Study design. Sample size was 60 and the sampling technique used was Quota Sampling.
Results: About 92% middle aged working women suffered mild level of stress in the study.
Discussion: The overall assessment reveals that though the subjects are normal in general, but a substantial proportion is at risk of developing psychosocial stress generated problems that may affect their mental health. Modification in coping strategies and planned interventions are desirable.

Statement of the problem
‘A study to assess the mental health of middle aged working women in selected areas of Pune’

Objectives of the study:
1. To assess the mental health of middle aged working women.
2. To find the association between findings of mental health with selected demographic variables of middle aged working women.

Introduction:
Middle age is the bridge between adulthood and old age, which requires special attention. During this period, in addition to physical and social changes some psychological changes also occur like fear of losing control, dependence on someone, beginning of realization that youth is getting over and old age is nearer, fatigue, lack of sexual interest, loss of memory, more tension etc. which may affect the overall well-being and positive mental health of women. A working woman bearing dual role responsibility one in family and other at job, when cannot discharge her duties equally efficiently feels tense and continuous tension creates stress which in turn may affect her mental health status. During middle age some biological changes like menopause, aging coupled with psychosocial factors and work-family conflict may generate irritation, frustration, anxiety, depression etc. in these women. The problems of working women are multidimensional and differ from woman to woman. Many studies have been done related to women and their mental health. A study on working women, family environment and
mental health indicated that there were significant differences in the family environment and mental health of working and non-working women. Mental health scores highlight that working women are trapped in a situation where they are getting difficulty in coping strategies to deal with it effectively and get mentally strained. Excess work, less freedom, high need for motivation and working situations are powerful source of stress among working female. Therefore, emotional balance, adjustment process, tolerance level and other personality attributes are under great threat, which affect negatively the mental health.

**Review of literature:**
The review of literature is organized under the following headings:
1. Review of literature related to Mental Health.
2. Review of literature related to Middle aged working women and their Mental Health.

**Warning signals of poor Mental Health:**
William C. Meninger, President of the Menninger Foundation, Topeka, Kanas, and United States of America drew up the following questions to aid in taking one’s mental health pulse:
1. Are you always worrying?
2. Are you unable to concentrate because of unrecognized reasons?
3. Are you continually unhappy without justified cause?
4. Do you lose your temper easily and often?
5. Are you troubled by regular insomnia?
6. Do you have wide fluctuations in your moods from depression to elation, back to depression, which incapacitate you?
7. Do you continually dislike being with people?
8. Are you upset if the routine of your life is disturbed?
9. Do your children continually get on your nerves?
10. Are you “brown off” and constantly bitter?
11. Are you afraid without real cause?
12. Are you always right and the other person always wrong?
13. Do you have numerous aches and pains for which no doctors can find a physical cause?

According to Manisha Singh (2006) Banaras Hindu University has conducted descriptive survey method on 'Assessment of Mental health' status of middle aged female school teacher of Varanasi city. A random sample of 50 middle aged female school teachers working in government girl’s school. The researcher concluded that the mental health score highlight that working women are trapped in a situation where they are getting difficulty in coping
strategies to deal with it's effectively and get mentally strained.

According to Yoon HS, Cho YC (2006). Department of Public Health, Graduate School of Chungnam National University, has conducted experimental research on 'Relationship between job stress contents, psychosocial factors and mental health status among university hospital nurses in Korea'. The present study was intended to assess the mental health of nurses working for university hospitals and to establish which factors determine their mental health. Self-administered questionnaires were given to 1,486 nurses. Result of the study showed that the factors influencing mental health status among subject nurses included sociodemographic characteristics such as age, number of hours of sleep, number of hours of leisure, and subjective health status; job-related characteristics such as status, job satisfaction, job suitability, stresses such as demands of the job, autonomy, and co-worker support; and psychosocial factors such as self-esteem, and locus of control. Based on the study results, improvement of mental health status among nurses requires the development and application of programs to manage job stress factors and/or psychosocial factors as well as sociodemographic and job-related characteristics.
Research approach
Quantitative approach

Research design
Exploratory Descriptive Study

Setting of the study
The present study will be undertaken in selected areas of Narhe.

Population
In the present study the Target population comprises of the middle aged working women in Pune. Accessible population comprises of middle aged working women in selected areas of Narhe.

Sample
In the present study the sample comprises of the middle aged working women between 40-60 years of age residing in Narhe.

Sample size – 60
Sampling technique – non probability disproportionate Quota Sampling technique

Inclusion criteria:
1. Middle aged working women between 40-60 years of age.
2. Middle aged working women willing to participate in the study.

Exclusion criteria:
1. Middle aged working women who don’t know reading and writing English, and Marathi.
2. Middle aged working women who are known cases of psychosomatic disorders.

Table 12.1: Description of mental health assessment tool:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Socio-demographic data sheet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>• Semi-structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rating/Likert Scale based</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>on Psychosocial Stress</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Scale (Indian Council of</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medical Research),</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Family-Work Conflict (Singh</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Manisha, Indian Journal of</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clinical Psychology),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• General health questionnaire</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Goldberg and Hiller)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Validity of the tool:
The tool was validated from eleven experts for section I and II.

Reliability of the tool:
Reliability of tool was obtained by split half method,

\[ r_1 = \frac{2r}{1+r} \]

where, \( r = \frac{\sum XY}{\sqrt{\sum X^2 \sum Y^2}} \)

\( r_1 \) = estimated reliability of the entire tool, \( r \) = Pearson’s correlation coefficient, \( \Sigma \) = summation, \( \sqrt{\cdot} \) = square root.

The reliability score of the tool estimated 0.94.

Pilot study:
The pilot study was done to assess the feasibility of the study, to check the language feasibility (English and Marathi), practicability, objectivity, validity and
reliability of the tool and to decide on plan of data analysis. The pilot study did not show any major flaw in the design of the tool and its administration. The subjects included in the pilot study were excluded in the final study.

Procedure for final data collection:
During the period of data collection the researcher visited the middle aged working women at their houses and at their working place and collected the data by administering the tool. First the researcher introduced himself and the study topic. Researcher explains about the consent to the participants. Assures the confidentiality of the data. Explain how to fill the answers in the sheet. All participants willingly participated in the study.

Results:

1. Demographic variables:
- Majority of 46.67% are of age group 40-45 years.
- Majority of 38.33% are Graduates and or Post-graduates
- Majority of 63.33% are Hindus.
- Majority of 95.00% are Married.
- Majority of 66.67% have Majority have nuclear families.
- Majority of 30% are nurses
- Majority of 58.34% have 2 children.

- Majority of 31.66% have individual monthly income between 10,001 to 20,000.
- Majority of 48.34% have total family income 30,001 rupees and above per month.
- Majority of 66.67% not yet attended menopause.

Table 12.2: Percentage distribution of stress factors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stress due to following</th>
<th>Not significant stress</th>
<th>Mild stress</th>
<th>Moderate stress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical dysfunction</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perimenopausal dysfunctions</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological dysfunctions</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economical difficulties</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverse situation</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family work conflict</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure-12.2: Percentage distribution of stress factors
Table 12.3: frequency and percentage distribution of sample according to ‘overall stress level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall stress level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all/ not significant stress</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>08.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes/ mild stress</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>91.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many times/ moderate stress</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often/ severe stress</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 12.3: percentage distribution of sample according to ‘overall stress level.

Interpretation:

92% of samples showed mild stress level and remaining 8% showed no significant stress level.

The major findings of the study:

- Majority of samples were from 40-45 years of age group and about 4 samples out of 60 were from 56-60 years of age group.
- Most of the samples were highly educated who had completed their graduation and post graduation. And only 5 samples out of total 60 samples were illiterate.
- Most of the samples about 38 are from Hindu religion.
- About 95% samples are married in the present study.
- Most of the samples, about 40 stay in nuclear family pattern, 19 in joint family pattern and one sample belonged to single parent family pattern.
- According to sampling technique used non-equivalent Quota sampling, the samples from different Quotas were as follows; Doctor-6, Nurse-18, Teacher-11, Clerical Staff-8 and 17 samples were IV class workers.
- Most of the samples about 35 have two children in their family.
- About 18 samples earn less than 10000 Rs per month, 19 samples earn in between 10 thousands to 20 thousands, 13 in between 20000-30000 Rs and 10 samples above 30 thousands.
- Family income of nearly half samples in above 30 thousands in month.
- Two third of samples had not attained menopause yet whereby about one third had attained menopause.
- Near about 58% of sample showed mild stress and 10% showed moderate stress due to physical dysfunctions.
- 90% samples had no significant stress due to perimenopausal symptoms and about 10% samples had mild level of stress due to perimenopausal symptoms.
- About 77% samples showed mild stress due to psychological dysfunctions.
- Among all samples 48% showed mild stress due to economical difficulties and 10% showed moderate level of stress.
- About half sampled showed mild stress and other showed no significant stress due to adverse situations.
- 16% samples showed moderate stress and 42% mild stress due to family work conflict.
- 92% of samples showed mild stress level and remaining 8% showed no significant stress level.
- There is no association between Age, Education status, Marital status, Religion, Type of family, Children in family, Individual income, Family income, and Menopausal status with mental health findings as the P value is greater than 0.05 and 0.01, and only the occupation and individual income demographic variables show association with the mental health findings as P value is 0.0000, 0.0010 respectively less than 0.05 and 0.01.

**Conclusion:**
The overall assessment reveals that though the subjects are normal in general, but a substantial proportion is at risk of developing psychosocial stress generated problems that may affect their mental health. Modification in coping strategies and planned interventions are desirable.

**References:**