

Effect of stress on international female students

[Health & Medicine](#), [Mental Health](#)



Introduction:

Education is highly competitive and stressful in today's era. We can find part-time or full-time students having a hectic schedule for their classes and jobs. Especially female students must balance many things during their academic life. This hectic schedule gradually develops mental and physical disturbance in their lives. Stress can be categorized into internal and external factor (Pourrajab, Rabbani, and Kasmaienezhadfar, 2014, pg. 32). Stress caused by an external source such as physical environment, job and relationship is termed as external stress whereas the one caused by nutritional status, attitude and thoughts are termed as internal stress. The purpose of this research paper is to illustrate how academic stress effect in international female students. We will also discuss the guidelines and suggestion to improve the mental and physical health of students during their academic career. Moreover, we will illustrate how institutions help international female students to overcome the stressful situations.

Stress:

Stress is considered as negative experience among the female students. It has various definitions, " Stress is an over- arousal situation that emerges in physical and psychological aspects, as a result of evaluating internal or external factors as dangerous or harmful" (Arslan, 2017, pg. 1736).

According to Dedejn (2008) " Academic stress is mental and emotional pressure, tension, or stress that occurs due to the demands of college life" (pg. 1). Moreover, study done by Cestari, Barbosa, Florencio, Pessoa and Moreira (2017) " Stress is a mental disorder occurs due to tension, irritation, confusion and fear. Stress triggers manifestations of depression, tachycardia,

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digestive disorder” (pg. 191). Pourrajab, Rabbani and Kasmaienezhadfar (2014) says “ It can be defined as a state of mental or emotional strain or suspense and as a number of normal reactions of the body (mental, emotional, and physiological) designed for self-preservation” (as cited in Shaikh, et al., 2004, pg. 33). Academic stress is associated with all college and university students. Ahmed and Julius (2015) states “ there was a significant relationship between academic performance, resilience, depression, anxiety and stress among women college students. Academic performance scores significantly predict depression, anxiety and stress scores among women college students” (pg. 370). Students are exposed to new education system, new place and foreign culture. Hence adjusting to new social life, culture and workload creates nervousness and stress among students, especially female students.

Effect of Stress:

Study and education system leads academic stress in students and it plays major role to trigger depression and physical illness (Dedeyn as cited in MacGeorge, Samter, & Gillihan, 2005, pg. 1), which cause negative impact on academic performance of students. Moreover, as university students, both male and female may experience myriad of situations of stress that generate feelings such as frustration, fear and anguish. It can sometimes initiate pathological disorder. (Cestari et al., 2017, pg. 191). In addition, female students in the field of management have to perform various duties during their studies. They also work part time in order to get some work experience which will help them in their professional career along with

routine household work, studying and project work. This busy schedule also triggers stress and mental tiredness to the students.

According to Dedeyn (2008), “ a study in Germany showed that short term (less than 2 years) female international students studying in Germany were less likely to receive social support than German students” (as cited in Kramer, Pruffer-Kramer, Stock, and Tshiananga, 2014, Pg. 1). Level and reasons of stress are different in male and female students. According to Pourrajab, Rabbani and Kasmaienezhadfar (2014), two stressful issues among female are the financial and academic problems (As cited in Richlin-Klonsky & Hoe, 2003, pg. 36). Sometimes, students’ families living with them during their study can also impact on their study. Jones, Mendenhall and Myers (2016) says “ women, on average, report experiencing a greater number and severity of stressors compared with men and often perceive stress as more negative and unacceptable. This may contribute to the heightened prevalence of negative physical and mental health problems noted in women” (pg. 205).

Findings:

Our group of six students were divided into two parts and made a survey of 12 students. All students are international female students and currently studying at TRU, Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada. The source of questionnaire is TRU stress management help centre. We found some interesting outcomes from this survey.

Procedure:

One group surveyed at International Building sitting area and another at Tim Horton's sitting area, where we usually find international students. We distributed questionnaires to the students and informed them that we are taking surveys regarding our report for effect of stress in international female students. We provided sheets to international female students only and around 12 female students participated.

Outcomes:

We found that majority of female students have problems regarding physical and mental health. Second factor causing stress is regarding school time schedule, attendance, course structure and so on. We hardly found one female student who worried about relationship.

Students Status School Money Body, mind and feelings Relationship**Female 3 2 6 1**

This study shows the cause of stress in female international students. We found that couple of female students discussed that they always worry about the number of assignments are given to them, schedule of their class, transfer credits, understanding language and subjects, and poor attendance. Due to summer classes, they must manage many things. Moreover, we realized that finance is not a big issue for the students as most of them already found jobs and they can easily afford their expenses such as their cable, mobile bills, groceries, monthly rent and shopping. There is negligible impact of homesickness and relationship related stress on female students.

However, we found that most of the female students were worried and get stressed regarding their physical and mental health. For instance, some of them are vegetarian and hard to found vegetarian food in cafeteria. Change in atmosphere and location creates mood swing and sometimes they feel sad and depressed. Couple of students informed that, their sleeping time has been changed and it's not regular. Therefore, they feel sleepy and stressed throughout the day.

Management of stress;

Stress is obvious in many international female students due to various reasons. It is impossible to control anxiety and stress, but we can reduce the effect of stress (Pourrajab, et al., 2014, pg. 33). There are many ways to reduce stress level in international female students. Universities and colleges should have some seminars and workshops regarding stress and provide information how to handle with this type of situation. Some physical and mental exercises are also helpful to reduce the stress. Universities and college should have some mentors for international students who organize creative activities such as meditation, " schedule time for learning" (Pourrajab, et al., as cited in Carter, Elzubeir, Abdulrazzaq, Revel, & Townsened, 2003, pg. 34) and some sport activities for physical fitness. Moreover, discussion with international students regarding solution of improving mental health. Students themselves manage stressful situations by eating healthy food, stay positive, outings with classmates or roommates, sleep at regular time, spend time with their friends, keep some time for fun, and to reduce burden of study.

Recommendations:

Above study clearly gives an idea about the stress, anxiety among international students either male or female students. But this study can also be further explored by asking some other questions not included in this study such as “ Do stress reactions correlate with whether a student is married, divorced, in a relationship or single?” (Calvarese, 2015, pg. 1183). Stress is major concern and it affect not only students’ mental and physical health but Do stress also affect student’s GPA, academic as well as professional progressive performance? Moreover, Do this type of stress leads to chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, diabetes, mental depressions and other heart related problems in future?

Some activities should be recommended for the academic institutions for international students to reduce stress. Institutions organized international clubs and students group and allow them to perform workshops that illustrate how to overcome the stressful conditions. These groups conduct activities such as organizing exercise, yoga and meditation classes, plan short trip at regular intervals and counselling. Stress is natural in international students, but we can get positive outcome with the help of students as well as academic institutions.