

## **Role Overload & Role Ambiguity among Male & Female Nurses in Nagpur City**

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**Abstract:** The Occupational Stress Index was administered to the nursing staff of a private hospital in Nagpur City. Data from a total 41 respondents was taken (22 female and 19 male). T-tests were run across the scores for Role Overload and Role Ambiguity for the groups and also descriptive statistics were derived. It is observed that there is a significant difference with respect to Role Overload and there is no significant difference for Role Ambiguity among male and female nurses.

**Keywords:** Role Stress, Role Overload, Role Ambiguity, Nursing, Private Hospitals

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### **Introduction:**

The day-to-day life of a normal person is filled with stress. Employees in any profession are bound to feel burdened by the responsibilities of their daily lives and this stress is many a times compounded by the jobs they have. The stress experienced by them may affect their lives, their jobs, and their health. All of this may also affect their productivity. It is quite possible that if this stress increases beyond a certain point, the person may no longer be able to cope and perform his duties effectively.

Nursing has always been one of the most stressful jobs in the world. The responsibilities of a nurse contain myriad tasks such as maintaining records, ensuring rounds, medicine administration along with caring for the patients. The nurses also have to deal with meeting the demands of the doctor, ensuring the needs of the patients as well as the job the pressures of the management. Nursing staff also has to deal with non-clerical and sometimes non-medical work as well. In order to tend to the needs of the superiors and the patients, nurses also have to work in shifts and at times, they also have to pull double-duties just to ensure that the patient is well taken care of.

Hospitals may also, at times, be under-staffed or have insufficient resources. The nature of the nursing profession also tends to stretch the nurses beyond the normal expected work schedules. The increasing awareness among customers and demand for better service, all tends to have an impact on the nursing staff by adding service quality pressures upon them as well. It is thus, quite possible that the nurses may feel overwhelmed by the nature and scope of their duties along with the effective demands of the superiors and management. The hospitals as well, due to the changing healthcare landscape may add to the overall stress experienced by the nurses.

### **Review of Literature:**

Occupational stress can be defined as a state of affairs wherein job-related aspects act together on an employee, thereby changing his/her psychological condition in such a way that the person is forced to diverge from standard functioning (Richardson KM, 2008). Stress due to work can end up being damaging for a person both physically and mentally. It can lead to high level of absenteeism, as well as, low levels of productivity. Stress is foremost in about 80 % of all work injuries and 40 % of workplace turnovers (Atkinson, 2004). Nursing is thus, a demanding job with high and complex requirements. Also, as cited by Safaris et al. (2016), nursing staff have to deal with a combination of too many responsibilities and very little authority to be able to take decisions while performing their jobs. This has been identified as some of the major sources of occupational stress amid nursing staff. Nursing is an exhausting job which demands a great deal from the people in this profession. A nurse in his or her daily work life has to come in contact with demise of patients and deal with their families. It is also possible that there may be disputes between peers, superiors or the patients and their families while they perform their jobs. This may lead to stress due to Role Overload and may also lead to Role Ambiguity with respect to their jobs.

The changing health care scenario, the nature of patient treatment, duration of hospital stays, increased awareness and the technological advancements, all add to the workload of nurses (Garrett D, 2001). Also, the increased compliances and effective demand for service tend to have an impact on nurses as well.

Role stress may be viewed as the consequence of disparity between an individual's perception of the characteristics of a specific role and what is actually being achieved by the individual currently performing the specific role (Lambert & Lambert, 2001). Thus, role stress occurs when there is incongruence between

perceived role expectations and achievement. Burnout is defined as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). Schaufeli (1990, cited in Janssen *et al.*, 1999) conducted a literature review of burnout, and found that burnout is strongly related to work overload, a lack of social support and role stress. Most of the studies investigating role stress and nursing have found work environment factors to be involved. For example, the experience of role stress is related to having little control in one's job, high job demands and lack of support from peers (V. Lambert, 2001).

The above findings by the various authors show that Role Overload and Role Ambiguity tend to have a prominent place in the overall stress causing reasons for the nurses. The effect of these two factors and how they affect male and female nurses may shed greater light as to how the stress is distributed.

### **Aim of the Study:**

The study aims to identify whether there is a significant difference between the stress caused by Role Overload among male and female nurses. The study also tries to explore whether there is a difference between male and female nurses with respect to male and female nurses.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

1. To study the distribution of Role Overload among male and female nurses
2. To study the distribution of Role Ambiguity among male and female nurses
3. To study if there is a significant difference between male and female nurses with respect to Role Overload
4. To study if there is a significant difference between male and female nurses with respect to Role Ambiguity

### **Hypothesis:**

$H_0^1$ : There is no significant difference of Role Overload among male and female nurses.

$H_a^1$ : There is a significant difference of Role Overload among male and female nurses.

$H_0^2$ : There is no significant difference of Role Ambiguity among male and female nurses.

$H_a^2$ : There is no significant difference of Role Ambiguity among male and female nurses.

### **Research Methodology:**

The study was conducted in a scientific manner and all measures were taken to ensure that appropriate methodology was applied.

### **Sample:**

Nurses from a private hospital in Nagpur City were administered the Srivastava & Singh Occupational Stress Index and their responses were noted. The sample under study consists of 19 male and 22 female respondents.

### **Primary Data:**

The primary data was collected through administering the questionnaire. Personal responses were also noted. However, the data collected from the personal responses was insignificant in nature and so was excluded.

### **Secondary Data:**

The appropriate journals and works of other authors on similar topics were studied. Papers and articles from the internet and journals were referred for the purposes of this study.

### **Data Collection:**

The data collected was entered into Microsoft Excel and SPSS software was used to analyze the dataset.

### **Limitations:**

The study was confined to a private hospital in Nagpur City. The scope and duration of the study was unsuitable for the collection of a greater sample.

**Data Analysis & Interpretation:**

Table No. 1: Role Overload Descriptives

Group Statistics					
	GENDER	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ROLE OVERLOAD	MALE	19	15.47	2.525	.579
	FEMALE	22	18.55	4.935	1.052

Table No. 1 describes the entire sample and showcases the classification as per the spread of Role Overload between male and female respondents. It is seen that the average score of Role Overload for males is 15.47 with a standard deviation of 2.525 whereas for females is 18.55 with a standard deviation of 4.935. It should be noted that the difference between means and deviation from the means for male and females seems to be a bit large.

Table No.2: Role Ambiguity Descriptives

Group Statistics					
	GENDER	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ROLE AMBIGUITY	MALE	19	10.05	3.082	.707
	FEMALE	22	11.09	3.544	.756

Table No. 2 describes the entire sample and showcases the classification as per the spread of Role Ambiguity between male and female respondents. It is seen that the average score of Role Overload for males is 10.05 with a standard deviation of 3.082 whereas for females is 11.09 with a standard deviation of 3.544. It should be noted that the difference between means and deviation from the means for male and females does not seem to be large.

Table No. 3: t-test between male and female respondents for Role Overload

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
ROLE OVERLOAD	Equal variances assumed	8.734	.005	-2.448	39	.019	-3.072	1.255	-5.610	-.533
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.558	32.206	.015	-3.072	1.201	-5.518	-.626

It is seen that for Role Overload, the male and female respondents  $p=0.005$ . Since,  $p$  observed  $< p=0.05$ , we say that there is a significant difference between the male and female nurses for Role Overload.

Table No. 4: t-test between male and female respondents for Role Ambiguity

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper

<b>ROLE AMBIGUITY</b>	<b>Equal variances assumed</b>	.526	<b>.473</b>	-.993	39	.327	-1.038	1.046	-3.153	1.077
	<b>Equal variances not assumed</b>			-1.003	38.996	.322	-1.038	1.035	-3.131	1.055

It is seen that for Role Overload, the male and female respondents  $p=0.473$ . Since,  $p$  observed  $> p=0.05$ , we say that there is no significant difference between the male and female nurses for Role Overload.

### Conclusions:

It is seen from the above results that there is a significant difference between male and female nurses for role overload. Also, as far as role ambiguity is concerned, there is no significant difference. The male and female nurses must be allotted different amount of workload with respect to the gender and associated roles that men and women are supposed to play. It is seen that there is no significant difference between role ambiguity and it may be because since it is a private hospital, the roles of its employees must be clearly defined and positions for specific tasks must be already filled.

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