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EVALUATION AND ALLEVIATING STRESS IN LATE ADOLSCENTS METHODS AND PROSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

College students experience high levels of stress due to academic pressure, financial concerns and social challenges. The study was conducted in institution among approximately 450 students using questionnaire forms with multiple choices. They selected the options according to their preferences. From this answered forms the needed data were collected from the study. This study examines the causes and effects of stress on students mental and physical well-being. Findings indicate excessive mobile use and lack of sleep are the most common causes leading to anxiety, depression and reduced academic performance. Effective stress management strategies include mindfulness, exercise, good sleep, reduced use of mobile, social support, time management. Institutional support, such as counselling services and wellness programs, plays a crucial role in stress management. Implementing structured stress management programs in colleges can help improve student well-being and academic success.

KEYWORDS

Stress, Stress management, Causes of stress, Academic stress and Lack of sleep.

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INTRODUCTION

Stress has become an inevitable part of college life, affecting students academically emotionally and physically with increasing academic pressures, social expectations, and personal responsibilities, many students struggle to manage stress effectively. If left unaddressed, prolonged stress can lead to anxiety, burnout and other health-related issues¹.

This survey-based project aims to explore the common sources of stress among college students, their coping mechanism, and the effectiveness of various stress management strategies. By gathering and analyzing student responses, this study seeks to provide insights into how stress impacts students' well-being and suggest practical ways to improve stress management techniques².

Understanding stress levels and their management is crucial for creating a healthier college environment. The findings of the can help students develop better support system and interventions to promote mental well-being in academic settings³.

College students often face stress due to academic, social, and personal pressures. This study investigates major causes, coping mechanisms and ways to improve stress management. By analyzing survey responses, it aims to enhance student well-being and promote better mental health strategies.

DEFINITION OF STRESS

Stress is a common occurrence in daily life and is caused by the body's normal physiological and psychological reaction to circumstances that are viewed as difficult or dangerous. It serves as a motivator to face and address issues. However, long-term negative health and emotional impacts can result from excessive exposure to it passing through a crucial transitional stage that can be among the most trying periods in a person's life as they move from adolescent to adulthood⁴.

In scientific terms, stress activates the body's "fight-or-flight" response, releasing hormones like cortisol and adrenaline. These hormones prepare the body to respond quickly to perceived threats. While short-term stress can enhance focus and motivation, prolonged or excessive stress can lead to mental, emotional and physical health issues⁵.

Stages of stress

The stages of stress refer to the three-phase process that the body undergoes in response to prolonged stress, as described in Hans Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS). These stages explain how the body reacts, adapts and eventually becomes exhausted when facing continuous stressors.

"The stages of stress are the progressive physiological and psychological responses the body undergoes when exposed to stressors, consisting of the Alarm Stage (initial reaction), Resistance Stage (adaptation and coping) and Exhaustion Stage (breakdown and depletion of resources)".

This concept helps in understanding how stress affects health and why managing stress early is crucial to preventing long-term damage⁶.

Alarm Stage (Immediate Reaction)

This is the first stage, where the body detects a stressful situation and prepares to deal with it through the "fight-or-flight" response.

Causes

The brain perceives a threat (real or imagined). The hypothalamus signals the adrenal glands to release adrenaline and cortisol (stress hormones).

Physical Symptoms

Increased heart rate and blood pressure.
Rapid breathing (to provide more oxygen to muscles)⁷.

Resistance Stage (Adaptation and Coping)

If the stressor continues, the body enters the resistance stage, where it tries to adapt and cope with the ongoing stress⁸.

Causes

Cortisol levels stay elevated to help the body maintain energy and endurance.
The body tries to balance the stress response while continuing daily activities.

Physical and Mental Symptoms

Irritability and frustration.
Difficulty concentrating or thinking clearly.
Fatigue and low energy levels.

Exhaustion Stage (Burnout and Breakdown)

If stress persists for too long and the body cannot recover, it enters the exhaustion stage. At this point, the body's ability to cope is depleted, leading to physical and mental breakdown⁹.

Causes

The immune system weakens, making you prone to illnesses.
Chronic fatigue and mental burnout set in.

TYPES OF STRESS

There are two types and they are as follows:

Acute stress

Episodic Stress

Chronic stress

Traumatic Stress (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder - PTSD)

Acute stress

This type is short-term and usually the more common form of stress.

Acute stress often develops when people consider the pressure of events that have recently occurred or face upcoming challenges in the near future¹⁰.

Causes

Facing an exam, interview, or deadline.

Experiencing a sudden argument or conflict.

Episodic Acute Stress

This occurs when acute stress happens frequently, leading to ongoing tension and pressure. People who often take on too many responsibilities or worry excessively are more likely to experience this type of stress¹¹.

Causes

Constant work deadlines and pressure.

Living in a chaotic or disorganized environment.

Chronic stress

This type of stress develops over a long period and is more harmful

Chronic stress makes it difficult for the body to return to a normal level of stress hormone activity¹².

Causes

Long-term financial difficulties.

Toxic relationships or family conflicts.

Serious health issues or care giving responsibilities.

Traumatic Stress (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder - PTSD)

This type of stress results from experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event, such as accidents, violence, abuse, or natural disasters. If left untreated, it can lead to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)¹³.

Causes

Experiencing war, assault, or severe accidents.

Witnessing a violent crime or disaster.

Childhood abuse or domestic violence.

SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

Stress symptoms among youth. The result indicates that students do experience stress and symptoms. The highest percentage is 81.60% suffering from depression followed by Insomnia (79.82%) and Depression (78.22%). It is observed that most of the youth suffering from depression, tension etc. Youngsters may be unable to concentrate on academics and sports. They isolate from family activities or peer relationships. Adolescents may be experimenting with drugs and alcohol. They may have poor appetite and low immunity¹⁴.

LEVEL OF STRESS AND SYMPTOMS

Level 1-Immediate stress

Increased heart rate and blood pressure

Rapid breathing

Perspiring and sweaty palms

Indigestion and nervous stomach¹⁵

Level 2: Continued stress

Feelings of being pressured

Exhaustion and fatigue

Anxiety

Memory loss

Colds and flu

Increase in smoking or alcohol and caffeine consumption¹⁶

Level 3: Ongoing stress

Insomnia

Errors in judgment

Personality changes

Autoimmune disorders

Heart disease

Mental illness¹⁷

STRESS MANAGEMENT AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

Effective stress management strategies can improve students mental health, academic performance and overall well-being.

There are several effective ways to manage stress some of them are mentioned below are,

TIME MANAGEMENT

Prioritize tasks

Organizing tasks based on importance and deadlines can reduce the feeling of being overwhelmed.

April – June

53

Create a study schedule

Allocating specific time slots for studying, rest and social activities can improve efficiency and reduce procrastination¹⁸

PHYSICAL EXERCISE

Regular physical activity

Exercise releases endorphins which help to reduce stress

Simple activities like walking, running, yoga, or swimming can be effective

Mind-fullness Practices

Yoga and combine physical activity with breathing exercises promoting relaxation¹⁹.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Aim of the study

To provide a data -driven understanding of how academic pressure, financial constraints, social relationships, time management challenges and lifestyle habits contribute to stress among students.

The survey will assess student's awareness, accessibility and utilisation of these resources in managing stress²⁰.

Objectives of the study

The primary objective of this survey is to investigate stress levels among college students, identifying common stressors, their impact on students mental and physical well- being and the effectiveness of various coping strategies.

PLAN OF WORK

The entire study is planned for a period of 3 months. The study design is given below,

Phase 1

Identify the scope

Conduct literature review

Design the questionnaire

Obtain consent from institution

Phase 2

Identify the knowledge of impact of stress in students when exposed to it.

Determine the causes and risk factors of stress.

Describe the demographic status and complications associated with the students.

Collecting the data based on questionnaire.

Phase 3

Evaluate the data
Documentation²¹

METHODOLOGY

Study design

Descriptive study

Study site

Sun College of Pharmacy and Research Centre

Study period

3 months

Sample size

Sample size of 450 students in institution were taken in this study.

Inclusion criteria

All students between the age group 19-21 were included.

All students in the institution were included.

Exclusion criteria

All the academic and administrative staff as well as other workers were excluded.

Materials used

A standard questionnaire forms were used.

Data collection

A set of 5 questionnaire forms, each containing 10 questions with multiple choices were prepared.

The prepared forms were given to students

They selected the choices according to their preferences from this the needed data for the study is collected²².

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the collected data are discussed. The findings that are based on surveys are presented. A total of 441 for B.Pharm and D.Pharm students were involved in this study. Students who participated in this study are 1stsem, 3rdsem, 5thsem, 6th sem and 1st year, 2nd year D.Pharm students. Majority students who is involved in this study are mostly the 3rd sem students. Overall, most of the female students participated in this study, all 444 respondents were of different age which is a range of 18 to 22 years old. The median of the respondents is 19 to 20 years old.

Level of Stress on Daily Basis

It was found that the stress level among the respondents are quite severe as most of the students had chosen the stress level value with a range of more than 5, with a sum up of 72.3%. Based on, the highest stress level chosen by students are Level 7 with 24.6%, which is very close to the highest stress Level 10. It is then followed by Level 8 with 18.5%, Level 5 with 16.9% and Level 6 with 13.8%. In short, majority of students are stressed²³.

DATA ANALYSED AND INTERPRETATION

The study aimed to examine stress levels among college students and the effectiveness of various stress management techniques. The findings revealed the following key insights:

Prevalence of Stress

A significant proportion of students reported moderate to high levels of stress. Common stressors included academic pressure (75%), financial concerns (55%) and social relationships (40%) and time management (25%).

Stress among college students is a widespread issue, affecting their academic performance, and overall well-being. Several studies indicates high levels of stress due to academic, financial, social and personal pressures²⁴.

Global Statistics on Student Stress

A study by the we found that around 60-80% of college students experience frequent stress.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that about 35-50% of college students worldwide suffer from mental health issues, including stress-related disorders.

In a survey conducted by the National College Health Assessment (NCHA) in the U.S., over 80% of students reported feeling overwhelmed by their responsibilities.

In India, a study found that over 75% of students experience moderate to high stress, with academic pressure being the primary cause²⁵.

Common Causes of Stress in College Students

Academic Pressure

Exams, deadlines, competition and maintaining high grades.

Financial Concerns

Tuition fees, student loans, and living expenses.

Career Uncertainty

Fear of unemployment and job market competition.

Effects of Stress on Students

Mental Health Issues

Anxiety, depression and burnout.

Physical Health Problems

Headaches, insomnia and weakened immunity.

Unhealthy Coping Mechanisms

Substance abuse, poor eating habits and social withdrawal²⁶.

Coping Mechanisms Used

Exercise and physical activity (60%)

Social support from friends and family (50%)

Meditation and mindfulness (30%)

Avoidance behaviors such as social withdrawal (25%)

Coping mechanisms refer to the strategies students use to manage stress. These can be classified into healthy (adaptive) and unhealthy (maladaptive) coping mechanisms²⁷.

Healthy (Adaptive) Coping Mechanisms

These strategies help reduce stress effectively without negative consequences.

Time Management

Increasing workload 47%, Eliminating procrastination 10%, creating more deadlines 20%, avoiding tasks 23%.

Physical Activity

Regular exercise 59%, skipping meals 9%, over working 5%, staying up all night 27%.

Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques

Deep breathing exercise 70%, complaining to others 11%, overthinking problems 20%, ignoring responsibilities 11%, engaging in hobbies 62%²⁸.

Seeking Support from friends and family

Emotional support and practical help 47%, financial assistance and academic advice 11%, carrier guidance and mental health support 26%²⁹.

Diet related habits

Eating a balanced diet 64%, skipping meals to save time 59%, consuming excessive caffeine 12%, eating sugary snacks 25%.

Engaging in Hobbies

Listening to music, reading, painting, or engaging in creative activities³⁰.

Unhealthy (Maladaptive) Coping Mechanisms

These strategies may provide temporary relief but often worsen stress in the long run.

Procrastination

Delaying tasks, leading to last-minute pressure and anxiety.

Substance Abuse

Using alcohol, drugs, or excessive caffeine to escape stress

Overeating or Undereating

Emotional eating or loss of appetite due to stress.

Social Withdrawal

Avoiding friends, family, or responsibilities.

Behaviour

Taking out stress through anger or frustration on others.

Aggressive Excessive Screen Time

Overuse of social media, gaming, or binge-watching as a distraction³¹.

Importance of Healthy Coping Strategies:

Reduces anxiety and depression.

Improves academic performance and focus.

Enhances overall well-being and resilience.

Strengthens relationships and emotional stability³².

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study offer valuable insights into the levels and causes of stress among pharmacy students, and the various coping mechanisms they employ to deal with it. Based on the survey data, the study demonstrates that stress is a prevalent issue among college students, with a significant percentage of respondents reporting moderate to high stress levels. This is consistent with existing research, which has highlighted that academic environments are often a source of significant stress due to multiple competing demands on students' time and attention³³.

Stress levels among students

The study found that a large proportion of students, specifically 72.3%, reported stress levels greater than 5 on a scale of 1 to 10. The highest reported stress level was 7 (24.6%), followed closely by

level 8 (18.5%) and level 5 (16.9%). These findings indicate that the majority of students experience a high level of stress in their daily lives. The findings are in line with global statistics indicating that a substantial number of students across the world experience similar levels of stress, particularly in academic settings (e.g., WHO reports that about 35-50% of students experience stress-related disorders).

Causes of Stress

Academic pressure emerged as the most significant cause of stress, affecting 75% of the respondents. This finding mirrors trends observed in other studies where academic-related stress (such as exams, deadlines, and competition) is identified as one of the primary stressors for students. Financial concerns were the second most common cause of stress, reported by 55% of students, which highlights the increasing burden of tuition fees, student loans, and the cost of living. Social relationships (40%) and time management (25%) also contributed to stress but to a lesser extent³⁴.

Coping Mechanisms Employed

The study identified several coping mechanisms students use to manage their stress. Among the healthy coping strategies, physical activity and exercise were the most commonly used, with 60% of students reporting that they engage in regular physical activity as a way to cope with stress. Additionally, seeking support from friends and family was another common coping mechanism, with 50% of students relying on emotional and practical support. Mindfulness practices, such as deep breathing exercises, were used by 70% of students, reflecting a growing awareness of the benefits of relaxation techniques in stress management. However, unhealthy coping mechanisms were also prevalent. These included avoiding tasks, excessive screen time, and social withdrawal. For instance, 59% of students reported skipping meals to save time, while 12% used excessive caffeine consumption as a coping mechanism. Such maladaptive strategies can have negative long-term effects on students' health and well-being³⁵.

Table No.1: Symptoms of stress

S.No	Symptoms	Percentage (%)	Rank
1	Headache	71.29	8
2	Tense muscles, sore neck and back	74.93	5
3	Fatigue	73.60	7
4	Anxiety, worry, phobias	67.20	10
5	Insomnia	79.82	2
6	Irritability	70.84	9
7	Bouts of anger	64.18	11
8	Depression	78.22	3
9	Constipation	75.38	4
10	Restlessness	73.69	6

Table No.2: Various symptoms in stress

S.No	Common symptoms	Emotional symptoms	Cognitive symptoms	Behavioural symptoms
1	Headaches or migraines	Anxiety or constant worry	Difficulty concentrating and remembering things	Changes in appetite (overeating or loss of appetite)
2	Muscle tension and body aches	Depression and feelings of sadness	Racing thoughts or constant overthinking	Increased use of alcohol, drugs, or smoking
3	Rapid heartbeat and high blood pressure	Irritability and anger outbursts	Poor decision-making and problem-solving skills	Social withdrawal and avoiding people Sleep disturbances (insomnia or oversleeping)
4	Fatigue and low energy	Feeling overwhelmed or helpless	Negative thinking or excessive self-criticism	Nervous habits like nail-biting or pacing
5	Stomach problems (nausea, diarrhea, constipation)	Mood swings and emotional instability	Feeling confused or mentally exhausted	Reduced productivity and procrastination
6	Shortness of breath or dizziness	Lack of motivation or enthusiasm	None	Overeating or drinking alcohol frequently as a coping mechanism.
7	Sweating excessively Weakened immune system (frequent colds or infections)	Feeling lonely or withdrawn from social life	None	None

Table No.3: Based on surveys are presented

S.No	Study of courses	No of responses
1	1 st sem B.Pharm	90
2	3 rd sem B.Pharm	100
3	5 th sem B.Pharm	81
4	6 th sem B.Pharm	84
5	D.Pharm	89

Table No.4: Results of the collected data are discussed

S.No	Gender	No of response
1	Male	137
2	Female	307

Table No.5: Level of Stress on daily basis

Stress level	Percentage (%)
1	0%
2	1.50%
3	3.10%
4	6.20%
5	16.90%
6	13.80%
7	24.60%
8	18.50%
9	9.20%
10	8.20%

Table No.6: Causes of stress

S.No	Causes of stress	Number of students response	Percentage (%)
1	Academic pressure	38	75
2	Financial concerns	34	55
3	Social relationships	30	40
4	Time management	15	25

Table No.7: Time Management

S.No	Time management	Percentage (%)
1	Increasing workload	47%
2	Eliminating procrastinating	10%
3	Creating more deadline	20%
4	Avoiding tasks	23%

Table No.8: Physical Activity

S.No	Physical activity	Percentage (%)
1	Regular exercise	59%
2	Skipping meals	9%
3	Over working	5%
4	Staying up all nights	27%

Table No.9: Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques

S.No	Mindfulness and Relaxation
1	Deep breathing exercise
2	Over thinking problem
3	Ignoring Responsibility
4	Engaging in hobbies

Table No.10: Seeking Support from friends and family

S.No	Seeking support from friends and family	Percentage (%)
1	Emotional support and practical help	47
2	Financial assistance and academic advice	11
3	Carrier guidance and mental health support	26
4	None of the above	16

Table No.11: Diet related habits

S.No	Diet related habits	Percentage (%)
1	Eating a balanced diet	4
2	Skipping meals to save time	59
3	Consuming excessive caffeine	12
4	Eating sugary snacks	25

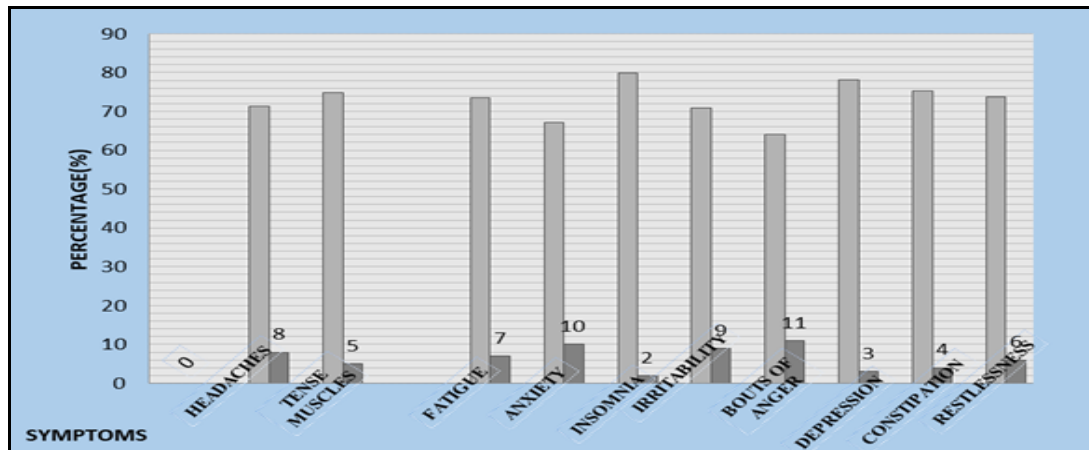


Figure No.1: Symptoms of stress

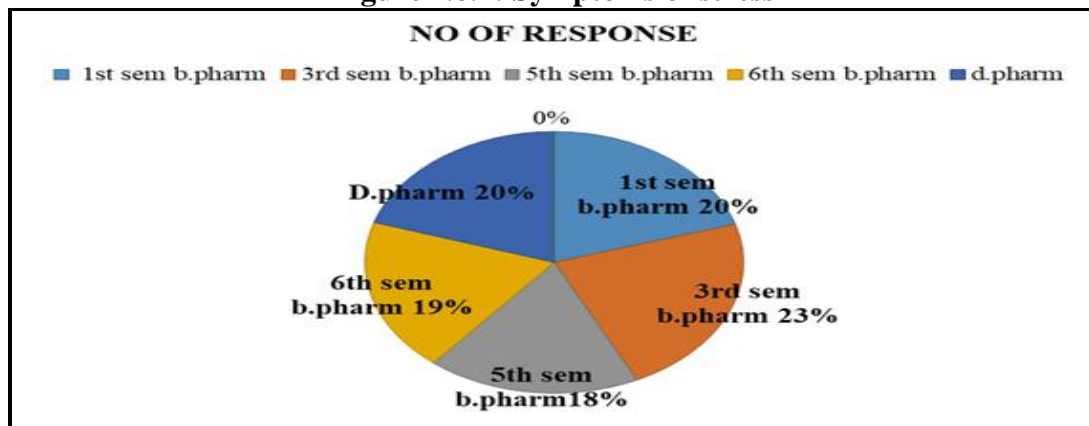


Figure No.2: No. of response in each semester

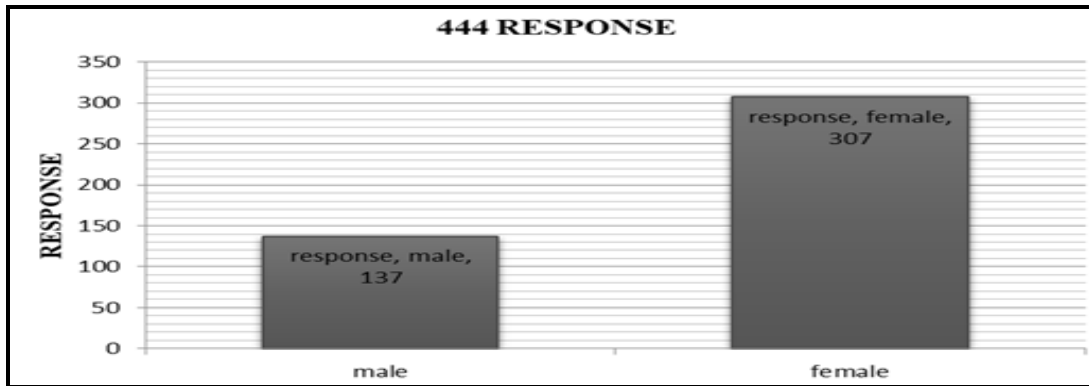


Figure No.3: Gender response

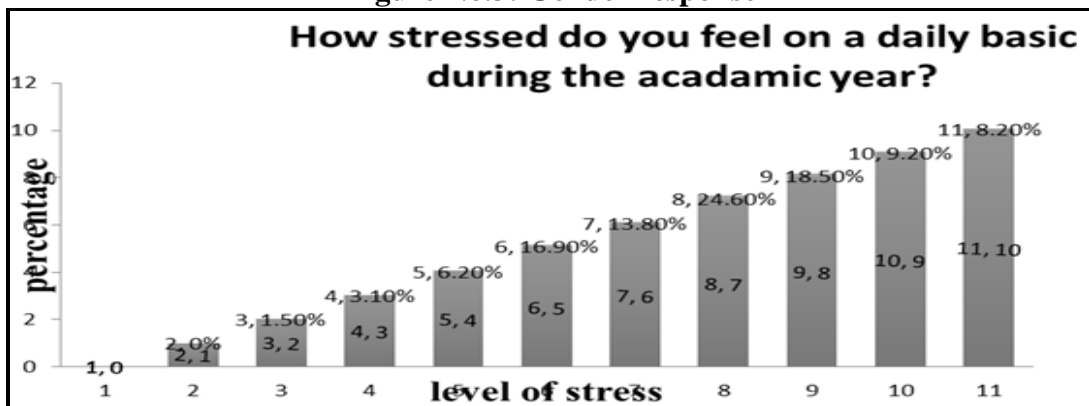


Figure No.4: Level of stress

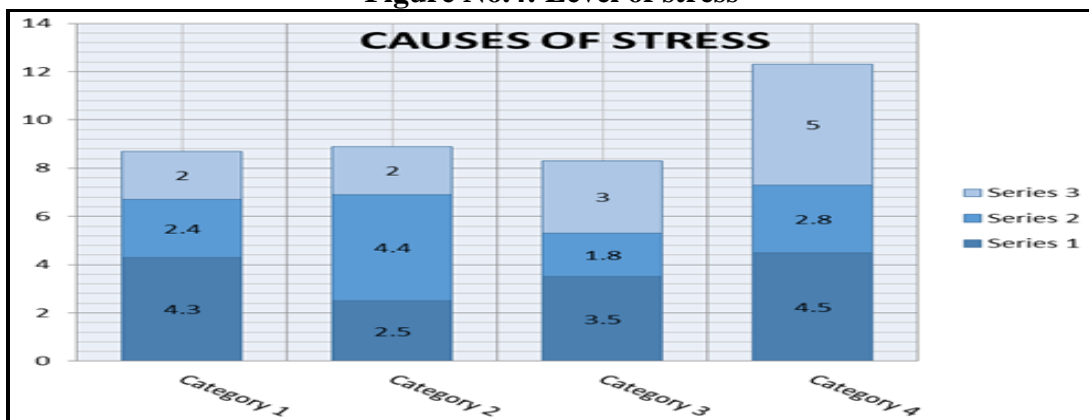


Figure No.5: Causes of stress

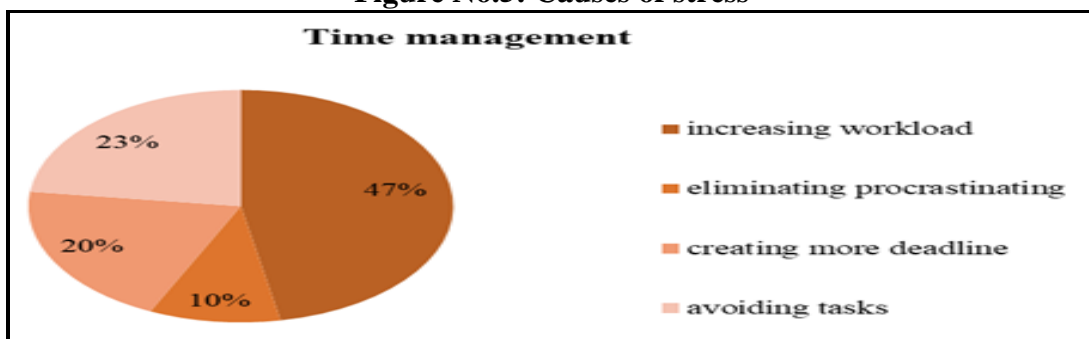


Figure No.6: Time management

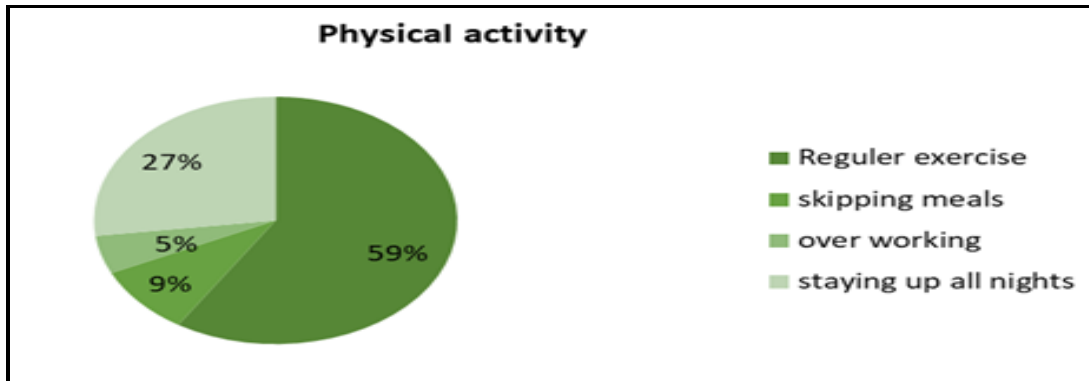


Figure No.7: Physical activity

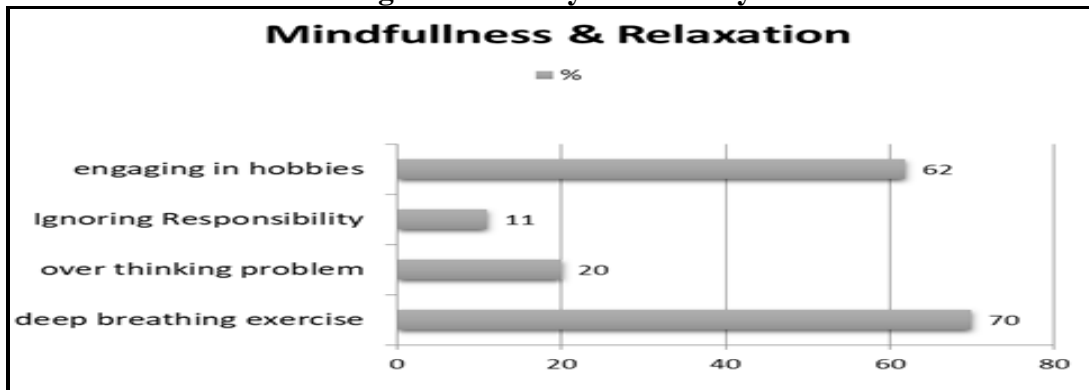


Figure No.8: Mind fullness and Relaxation Techniques

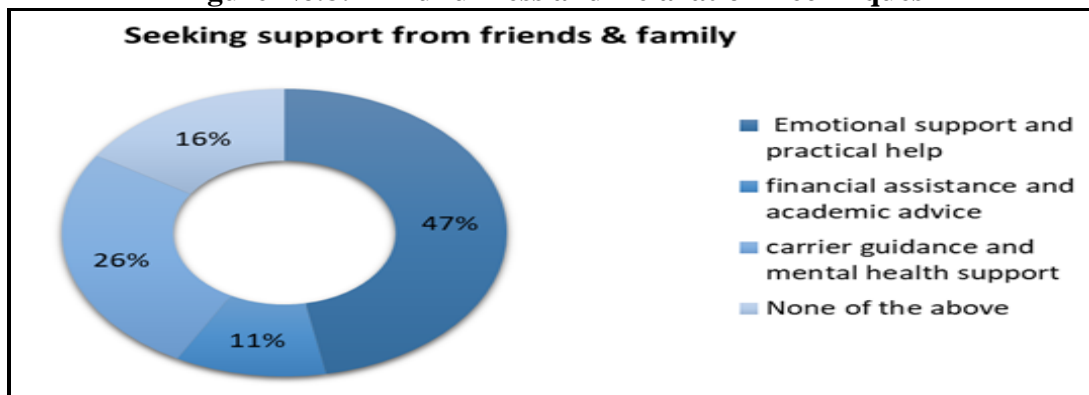


Figure No.9: Seeking Support from friends and family

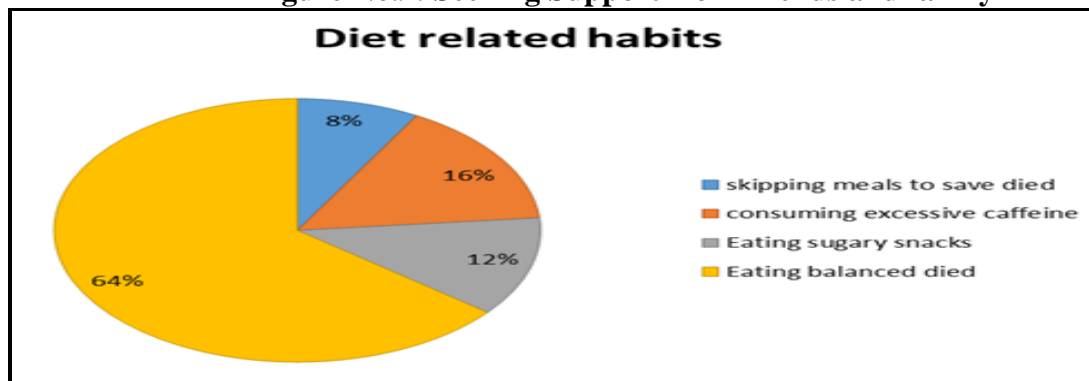


Figure No.10: Diet related habits

CONCLUSION

From the data collected, excessive mobile use and lack of sleep are the most common causes of stress. Excessive mobile phone usage among college students contributes to poor sleep quality, leading to increased stress, anxiety, and reduced academic performance leads to academic pressure secondary concern. Late-night screen time disrupts sleep patterns, causing insomnia and fatigue, which negatively affect concentration and mental well-being. The study highlights that lack of sleep, combined with mobile addiction, worsens stress levels and affects overall health. To reduce these negative effects, students should set screen time limits, follow a consistent sleep schedule, and avoid social media before bed, practice mindfulness and relaxation, stay physically active, seek support if needed, engage in offline activities. Educational institutions can also promote awareness about digital detox and the importance of sleep for better academic success and well-being.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflict of interest.

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