



A Study to Assess the Level of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Among Nursing Students in Community Settings

Karishma Maurya¹, Amit Kumar², Satish Kumar Sharma³, Krishna Gopal Sharma⁴,
Dinesh Kumar Kachhawa⁵, Athira B Prasad⁶

¹Assistant Professor, Era College of Nursing Lucknow, U.P

²Assistant Professor, KMC College of Nursing, Maharajganj, Uttar Pradesh

³Professor, Samarpan Institute of Nursing and Paramedical Sciences, Lucknow, 1056 - Jainabad,
Goyala, Deva Rd, Chinhat, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

⁴Professor, Desh Bhagat University, Punjab

⁵Associate Professor, Rani Durgawati Nursing College, Banda, UP

⁶Associate Professor, Vijaya College of Nursing Kottarakkara, Kollam, Kerala

Abstract

Introduction: After being exposed to stressful events, a mental health condition called post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) may develop. Because they frequently encounter emotionally taxing and stressful situations during clinical and community assignments, nursing students are vulnerable to PTSD symptoms. Early PTSD detection is essential to nursing students' academic progress and psychological well.

Methodology: For a quantitative descriptive cross-sectional study, 120 nursing students from certain nursing colleges were chosen using an appropriate sample approach. Data was collected using a structured demographic questionnaire and the PTSD Checklist-Civilian Version (PCL-C). Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the data analysis process.

Results: The findings showed that 35% of nursing students had mild PTSD, 45% had moderate PTSD, 15% had severe PTSD, and 5% had symptoms that were extremely severe. There was a strong correlation ($p < 0.05$) between the severity of PTSD and previous exposure to stressful situations.

Conclusion: The results of the study showed that a significant portion of nursing students experienced moderate to severe symptoms of PTSD. Regular mental assessment, counseling services, and stress-reduction strategies are recommended for nursing students.

Keywords: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Nursing Students, Community Settings, Mental Health, Psychological Stress, Trauma Exposure.

INTRODUCTION

Exposure to stressful events, such as accidents, violent crimes, natural disasters, abuse, or witnessing potentially lethal situations, can cause post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a mental condition. Intrusive thoughts, avoidance behaviors, negative mood and cognitive abnormalities, and hyperarousal are all signs of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).¹

Nursing students are frequently put in emotionally challenging situations during their academic and clinical training. Exposure to critically ill individuals, mortality, emergencies, and community health crises can all worsen psychological discomfort and trauma-

Corresponding author: Karishma Maurya, ¹Assistant Professor, Era College of Nursing Lucknow, U.P
E-mail : karishma.best45@gmail.com

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related symptoms.²

Vulnerable populations, public health emergencies, poverty-related challenges, and crisis events in community settings are common experiences for nursing students. Such encounters may worsen emotional strain and lead to the development of PTSD symptoms³

It has been demonstrated that untreated PTSD negatively impacts academic performance, interpersonal relationships, professional competency, and overall quality of life.⁴

As a result, it's crucial to identify and treat PTSD in nursing students as soon as feasible. Several studies have shown that the prevalence of PTSD in nursing students and healthcare workers varies. A better knowledge of psychological health can help educational institutions develop preventive and supportive treatments.⁵

In order to comprehend the scope of the issue and create practical methods for promoting mental health, it is crucial to measure PTSD levels among nursing students in community settings.⁶

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the level of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder among nursing students in community settings.
2. To determine the association between PTSD levels and selected demographic variables.

HYPOTHESES

H₁: There will be a significant level of PTSD among nursing students in community settings.

H₂: There will be a significant association between PTSD levels and selected demographic variables.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

Quantitative Research Approach.

Research Design

Descriptive Cross-Sectional Research Design.

RESULTS

Objective 1: To Assess the Level of PTSD Among Nursing Students

Table 1: Distribution of Nursing Students According to PTSD Level (N=120)

PTSD Level	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Mild	42	35.0
Moderate	54	45.0
Severe	18	15.0
Very Severe	6	5.0
Total	120	100

The above table shows that 45% of nursing students had moderate PTSD, 35% had mild PTSD, 15% had severe PTSD, and 5% had very severe PTSD symptoms.

Setting of the Study

Selected community health training areas attached to nursing colleges.

Population

All nursing students undergoing community health postings.

Sample Size

120 nursing students.

Sampling Technique

Convenient Sampling Technique.

Inclusion Criteria

- Nursing students willing to participate.
- Students undergoing community posting during the study period.

Exclusion Criteria

- Students diagnosed with severe psychiatric illness.
- Students unavailable during data collection.

Research Tool

Section A:

Demographic variables including age, gender, year of study, residence, previous traumatic exposure, and family type.

Section B:

PTSD Checklist-Civilian Version (PCL-C).

Data Collection Procedure

Official authorization was acquired from the relevant authorities. Participants gave their informed consent. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data.

Ethical Considerations

- Obtained institutional ethics approval.
- Maintaining confidentiality.
- It was entirely voluntary to participate.

Plan for Data Analysis

- The percentage and frequency.
- The standard deviation and mean.
- Chi-square association test.

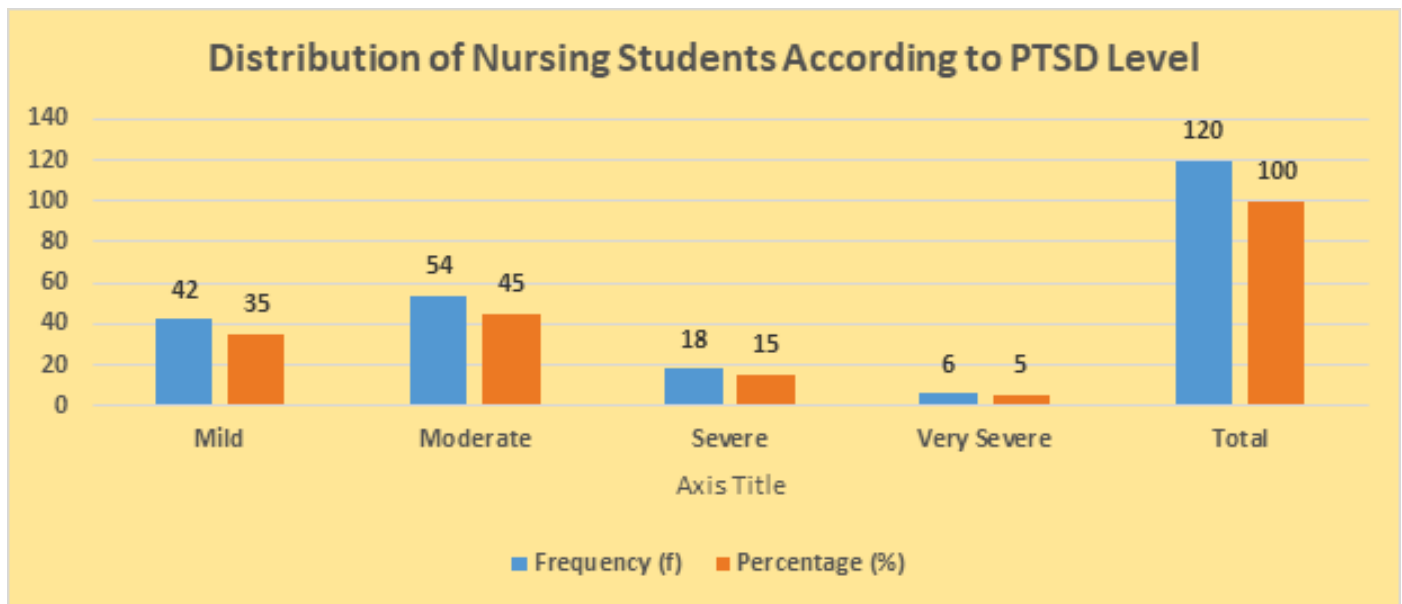


Figure 01: Distribution of Nursing Students According to PTSD Level

Table 2: Mean PTSD Score Among Nursing Students

Variable	Mean	SD
PTSD Score	42.6	10.8

The mean PTSD score was 42.6 ± 10.8 indicating a moderate level of PTSD among nursing students.

Objective 2: Association Between PTSD Level and Demographic Variables

Table 3: Association Between PTSD Level and Previous Traumatic Exposure

Variable	χ^2 Value	df	p-value
Previous Traumatic Exposure	8.54	3	0.036*

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

The findings indicate a statistically significant association between PTSD level and previous traumatic exposure among nursing students.

DISCUSSION

The majority of nursing students reported minor PTSD symptoms, according to the current study. According to Smith et al., nursing students who worked in demanding clinical environments reported feeling more psychologically uncomfortable.⁷

Additionally, the study found a significant relationship between PTSD levels and previous stressful exposure. These findings are consistent with recent studies demonstrating that prior traumatic events increase vulnerability to PTSD symptoms.⁸

The study's low rate of PTSD highlights how important it is for nursing schools to have psychological support systems. Regular counseling and mental health screening programs may improve

students' well-being.⁹

CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that most nursing students in community settings have minor PTSD symptoms. Previous traumatic exposure was significantly connected with PTSD levels. The findings underscore the need of mental health promotion, supportive treatments, and early diagnosis for nursing students.^{10,11}

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Check for mental health problems in nursing students on a regular basis.
2. Offer counseling and psychological support services.

3. Hold seminars on stress reduction and resilience building.
4. Replicate the study with a larger sample size.
5. Conduct long-term studies to assess PTSD over time.
6. Develop intervention strategies for trauma management.

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Conflict of Interest: None

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