

Original Research Article

Prevalence of Stress and Coping Skills in the Community of Taman Sri Sungai Pelek, Sepang

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ABSTRACT

Background: Stress could affect the quality of our life through different aspects such as health and social relationship. It ranges from worries to a serious long term condition. Therefore, a good stress coping skill is important.

Objective: This study investigates the prevalence of stress and coping skills towards stress among the community of Taman Sri Sungai Pelek.

Methods: A cross sectional study was conducted in Taman Sri Sungai Pelek Sepang, Malaysia with sample size of 168 respondents. A simple random sample of adults aged 18 years and above was selected. Data was collected by an interviewed questionnaire.

Result: The prevalence of stress is 20.8%. Family related reasons show the highest cause of stress (25.2%) among the community followed by financial (24.1%) and work (20.9%). As for coping skills, the highest percentage of coping skills among the community are to keep calm (14.4%) followed by relaxing and worshipping with the percentage of 12.8% and 11.8% respectively.

Conclusion: The prevalence of stress in the community of Taman Sri Sungai Pelek, Sepang, Selangor is low. Family is the major cause of stress, whereas keeping calm is the favorite stress coping skill.

Keywords: Stress, Causes, Coping Skills.

INTRODUCTION

Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. ^[1] Mental health is very important because any mental health problem such as severe stress can lead to depression. Severe depression can also lead to early death.

Stress can affect our quality of life through different aspects such as health and social relationship. Higher mental distress

can lead to a lower quality of life. ^[2] Moreover, stressful life events are associated with a significantly increased risk for mortality, mediated by smoking, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. ^[3]

A study has been conducted to assess the prevalence of stress, causes and the coping methods in community of Taman Sri Sungai Pelek, Sepang, Selangor, Malaysia, to improve the mental health status of the community.

MATERIALS & METHODS

Cross-sectional study was conducted for two weeks in a housing area in Sepang,

Selangor. Taman Sri Sungai Pelek has been chosen as the community to be studied because of its multi racial residents to better represent a sample of an average community in Malaysia.

Stratified random sampling was used to classify the single and double storey houses. Systematic random sampling was then used to pick the houses and respondents have been sampled through simple random sampling. The inclusion criteria were respondents aged 18 years old to 75 years old, Malaysian citizens understands Malay and has no psychiatric background. Whereas, the exclusion criteria were respondents who unable to complete the questionnaire due to disability such as mute or deafness.

All respondents were interviewed at their residential settings. A structured questionnaire was used to collect the Socio-demographic details and Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS 21). [4] was used for measuring stress. Informed consent was obtained from the participants before collecting data. Those who had DASS score of less than 8 were considered normal and more than 8 as stressed.

RESULTS

A total of 168 out of 172 participants participated in this study, giving an overall response rate of 97.7%.

Table 1: Prevalence of stress among respondents

Stress status	No.	%
Normal	133	79.2
Stress	35	20.8
TOTAL	168	100

The prevalence of stress in the community of Taman Sri Sg. Pelek was 20.8%. Table 2 shows that out of 35 subjects who were stressed, the highest prevalence were from the age group of 18-29 (31.4%), female (68.6%), Indian (57.1%), married (68.6%) and housewives (31.4%).

Family problems were the highest cause of stress among the respondents with the percentage of 25.2%, followed by financial crisis (24.1%) and work (20.9%).

Table 2: Socio-demographic characteristic among respondents with stress

Socio-demographic group		Stress Status	
		n	%
Age group	18-29	11	31.4
	30-39	10	28.6
	40-49	4	11.4
	50-59	7	20.0
	≥60	3	8.6
Gender	Male	11	31.4
	Female	24	68.6
Race	Malay	12	34.3
	Chinese	3	8.6
	Indian	20	57.1
Marital status	Single	7	20.0
	Married	24	68.6
	Divorce	1	2.8
	Widowed	3	8.6
Occupation	Government	3	8.6
	Private	8	22.9
	Self-employed	3	8.6
	Student	4	11.4
	Not working	2	5.7
	Housewife	11	31.4
	Pensioner	3	8.6
	Others	1	2.8
Total		35	100

Table 3: Causes of stress among respondents

Causes of stress	Frequency	
	No.	%
Family	70	25.2
Financial	67	24.1
Work	58	20.9
Health	47	16.9
Relationship	20	7.2
Education	16	5.7
TOTAL	278	100

Table 4: Stress coping skills among respondents

Stress coping skill	Frequency	
	No.	%
Keep calm	94	14.4
Relax	84	12.8
Talk to someone	77	11.8
Thinking	77	11.8
Worship	77	11.8
Breathing technique	75	11.5
Exercise	61	9.3
Recreation	54	8.2
Express in words	29	4.4
Massage	26	4.0
TOTAL	654	100

Keeping calm shows the highest coping skills towards stress among the respondents (14.4%) and followed by relaxing (12.8%). Talking to someone, thinking and worshipping showed 11.8% respectively (Table 4).

DISCUSSION

The prevalence of stress in this study was 20.8%, which is lower than the previous studies. A study by APA in United States showed 22% of population with

stress, and another study by Masimalani R had 38.8% of population in stress. However, the prevalence in this study was higher than a study done in the community of Selangor (10.3%). [5-7]

In this study, female respondents, especially housewife have higher prevalence of stress, which is similar with a study done by Khadijah S et al, where there is a significant relationship with females having higher mean scores than males by 13.13 (7.43) to 14.44 (7.09). [8] The higher prevalence of stress among the age group 18-29 might be correlate with the higher prevalence of stress among students, in which Khadijah S. et al in her study shows higher stress scores were significantly higher among older students (20 and above), This also can be due to factors such as work, money and relationship as study done in America, shows that millennial generation are stress due to work (76%), money (73%) and relationship (59%). [9]

The higher prevalence of stress among workers is similar as studies done by Sami et al (17.9%), Nor Liyana & Mansor (55%) and in Pakistan (7%). [10-12] The stressors among the employees are due to roles (57.5%), job environment (50%) and responsibility (45%). [13]

Financial problem also contributes towards mental stress of a community, as showed by Gupta et al, where 54.4% of respondents having financial stress and lower cost of living can decrease financial stress (betas -0.339 , -0.354 , -0.357). [14,15]

This study also found that the community used active coping skill strategies such as breathing technique, keeping calm, massage, thinking positive and expressing with word. A study done among the American community shows that religion is the most common way to deal with stressful events (23%). Another study also shows 54.8% of the respondents relieve stress by exercising, meeting friends, family members and approaching health personnel, whereas Kim et.al reports respondents prefer a variety of activities such as club activities, volunteer work, and hobbies as a

proactive way of coping with acculturative stress. [16-18] Emotional support such as talking to someone (45.8%) and express in word (17.3%) especially family is much higher (14%) in America compared to the study done by Norman B in the past year, and among the Asian Indian population, they consider relatives, friends and community as a part of family and relies on this network for support in times of need. [19,20]

CONCLUSION

The prevalence of stress in the community of Taman Sri Sungai Pelek, Sepang, and Selangor is low. Keeping calm, relaxing, and worshipping is among the stress coping skills used within the community.

For future researches we would like to recommend a study on the causes of stress and coping skills toward stress among the housewives in Taman Sri Sungai Pelek as the prevalence of stress among the housewives were high.

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