

## OP 03 - Perceived Stress and Its Correlates among Advanced Level Students in Anamaduwa Educational Division, Sri Lanka

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**Background:** The child undergoes enormous biological, psychological, cognitive and social challenges with the rapid transition from childhood to adolescence. Adolescents are more vulnerable for stressors with the continued maturation of brain during this period. Present study was conducted to assess perceived stress, stress contributing factors, coping methods and its correlates among sample of Advanced Level (A/L) students.

**Objectives:** To assess the perceived stress levels and its correlates among advanced level students in Anamaduwa educational division.

**Methodology:** A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted among 394 (n=394) A/L students selected from three schools in Anamaduwa educational division. Self-administered perceived stress scale was used to assess the stress levels. Another questionnaire was developed to assess socio-demographic data, coping methods, stress factors and correlates. Data was analyzed by SPSS 22 version software.

**Results and conclusions:** Sample consists of 73% (n=288) females and 27% (n=106) males. Mean Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) score was  $22.91 \pm 4.39$ . The highest mean PSS score was indicated by Science stream students ( $23.81 \pm 4.208$ ) whereas the lowest score 22 ( $SD \pm 4.26$ ) was indicated by Commerce students. Academic workload, financial issues in family, peer problems and issues in romantic relationship were the main factors contributing to stress. Talking with friends, TV watching, sleeping were the main strategies used by adolescents to cope with stress. 50% (n=53) and 42.44% (n=45) of male students use alcohol and cigarette smoking and illegal substances respectively as coping methods. Results of the present study revealed high-perceived stress among A/L students. School based interventions such as counseling programs, promotion of recreational and physical activities, training on relaxation and parent awareness programs are recommended.

**Keywords:** Advanced Level, Anamaduwa, correlates, perceived, stress