

OP 08 - Stress Level among Disabled Army Soldiers in Gampaha District

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Background: Stress is a normal reaction of body and mind to a demanding situation. Most people already know about the effect of stress on different health conditions; but there is less awareness of its influence on the disabled. Disability can be extremely stressful; studies had revealed that high levels of stress have been associated with morale and well-being issues among disabled soldiers.

Objectives: This study investigated the stress level among disabled army soldiers at 'Ranaviru Gammana' in Gampaha District.

Methodology: A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted among 400 disabled army soldiers after obtaining ethical approval. Self-prepared questionnaire was administered to gather socio demographic data, coping methods and substance usage. Further, self-administered Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) which validated and widely used in Sri Lanka was used to measure perceived stress. Data were analysed using SPSS 22 version.

Results and conclusions: Mean age of the sample was 42 (SD±8.42); age ranged from 22-57. All participants were disabled; legs (51%) were the most lost/ disabled body part followed by spinal injuries (21%), hands (18%) and other body parts like eye, ear and etc. (9%). Mean stress level of the overall sample was 18.36 (SD±5.06), ranged between 7 -28. Highest mean PSS was 18.33 (SD±5.29) that obtained by the army soldiers who lost their legs and minimum PSS score was obtained by the army soldiers who lost their other body parts. Although army soldiers had used different coping methods; they had reported higher stress level in this study. Majority of the soldiers had used some substances like Alcohol (85%); Cigarettes (73%); Ganja (Cannabis) (24%), but few of them were addicted to the usage of substances. Majority of the army soldiers suffered from different disabilities due to loss of different body parts. Losses of legs were the major disability among them and reported higher stress level than of others. Mild to moderate stress was observed among the overall sample. Coping methods were not much helpful for dealing with the stress of army soldiers. Different stress management and coping methods should be implemented in those settings effectively to relieve their stress.

Keywords: Army soldiers, disabled, Gampaha district, perceived stress