

Anxiety, Perceived Stress and Coping Strategies Among Nursing Students: A Cross Sectional Study

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How to cite this article: : Chauhan HG, Parmar SB, Vyas HD, Parmar MB. Anxiety, Perceived Stress and Coping Strategies Among Nursing Students: A Cross Sectional Study. GFNPSS-IJMR 2026; 7:3: 3345-3349

Submitted: 19 March 2026: **Accepted:** 30 March 2026: **Published:** 31 March 2026

Abstract

Background: High levels of stress and anxiety are frequently experienced by nursing students as a result of professional expectations, clinical exposure, and academic pressure.

Materials and Methods: One hundred nursing students chosen by convenient sampling participated in a cross-sectional study. The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), Brief COPE, and GAD-7 were among the standardized instruments employed. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data.

Results: Most students had considerable stress (52%) and moderate anxiety (48%). Compared to emotion-focused coping (32%) and avoidant coping (22%), problem-focused coping was employed more frequently (46%). Stress and coping mechanisms were shown to be significantly correlated ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusion: Stress management strategies are necessary because nursing students have moderate levels of anxiety and stress.

Keywords: Anxiety, Stress, coping strategies, Nursing students, Cross-sectional study

Introduction

Because of its tough academic curriculum and emotionally taxing clinical exposure, nursing education is usually regarded as one of the most demanding professional training programs. Nursing students' psychological well-being is greatly impacted by the stressful conditions they routinely encounter, such as patient suffering, death, a demanding course load, and performance expectations.¹

Nursing students frequently suffer from anxiety, which is frequently brought on by pressure to perform well in clinical settings, fear of failing, and uncertainty about their future employment opportunities.² According to

studies, nursing students' dual responsibilities of academic and clinical competence cause them to have higher anxiety levels than students in other fields.³

The degree to which people consider certain circumstances in their lives to be stressful is known as perceived stress. Numerous factors, including as academic obligations, poor time management, interpersonal interactions, and clinical obstacles, affect nursing students' perceptions of stress.⁴ Burnout, poor academic achievement, and mental health problems including anxiety and depression can result from ongoing stress.⁵

Coping mechanisms are essential for controlling stress

and anxiety. The term "coping" describes the behavioral and cognitive strategies employed to deal with stressful circumstances. It can be broadly divided into three categories: avoidant coping, emotion-focused coping, and problem-focused coping.⁶ While maladaptive coping can exacerbate stress consequences, effective coping techniques can lessen psychological discomfort and enhance general wellbeing.⁷

According to earlier research, depending on personal resilience and environmental circumstances, nursing students frequently employ both adaptive and maladaptive coping mechanisms. Nonetheless, little study has been done on the evaluation of anxiety, perceived stress, and coping mechanisms in nursing students in India, especially in Rajasthan.⁸

Therefore, this study aims to assess the levels of anxiety, perceived stress, and coping strategies among nursing students and to explore the association between stress and coping mechanisms.

Objectives

1. To assess the level of anxiety among nursing students.
2. To assess the level of perceived stress among nursing students.
3. To identify coping strategies used by nursing students.
4. To find the association between stress levels and coping strategies.

Materials and Methods

Research Approach: Quantitative approach

Research Design: Cross-sectional descriptive design

Setting: Selected nursing college

Sample Size: 100 nursing students

Sampling Technique: Convenient sampling

Inclusion Criteria:

- Nursing students willing to participate
- Available during data collection

Exclusion Criteria:

- Students absent during data collection

Data Collection Tools:

- Section A: Demographic variables
- Section B: GAD-7 (Anxiety)
- Section C: Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)
- Section D: Brief COPE Scale

Data Collection Procedure:

Permission was obtained from the institution. Informed consent was taken. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires.

Ethical Consideration:

Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained.

Data Analysis:

Descriptive (frequency, percentage) and inferential statistics (Chi-square test) were used.

Results

Based on the goals of the study, descriptive and inferential statistics were used to examine the data gathered from 100 nursing students. The results are broken down into the following areas, starting with the participants' demographics

Table 01: Demographic Characteristics of Nursing Students (n=100)

S. No.	Demographic Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age (years)	17–19	30	30%
		20–22	50	50%
		23 & above	20	20%
2	Gender	Male	35	35%
		Female	65	65%
3	Course	GNM	40	40%
		B.Sc Nursing	60	60%
4	Year of Study	1st Year	28	28%
		2nd Year	30	30%
		3rd Year	22	22%
		4th Year	20	20%
5	Residence	Urban	45	45%
		Rural	55	55%
6	Previous Exposure to Stress Management	Yes	38	38%
		No	62	62%

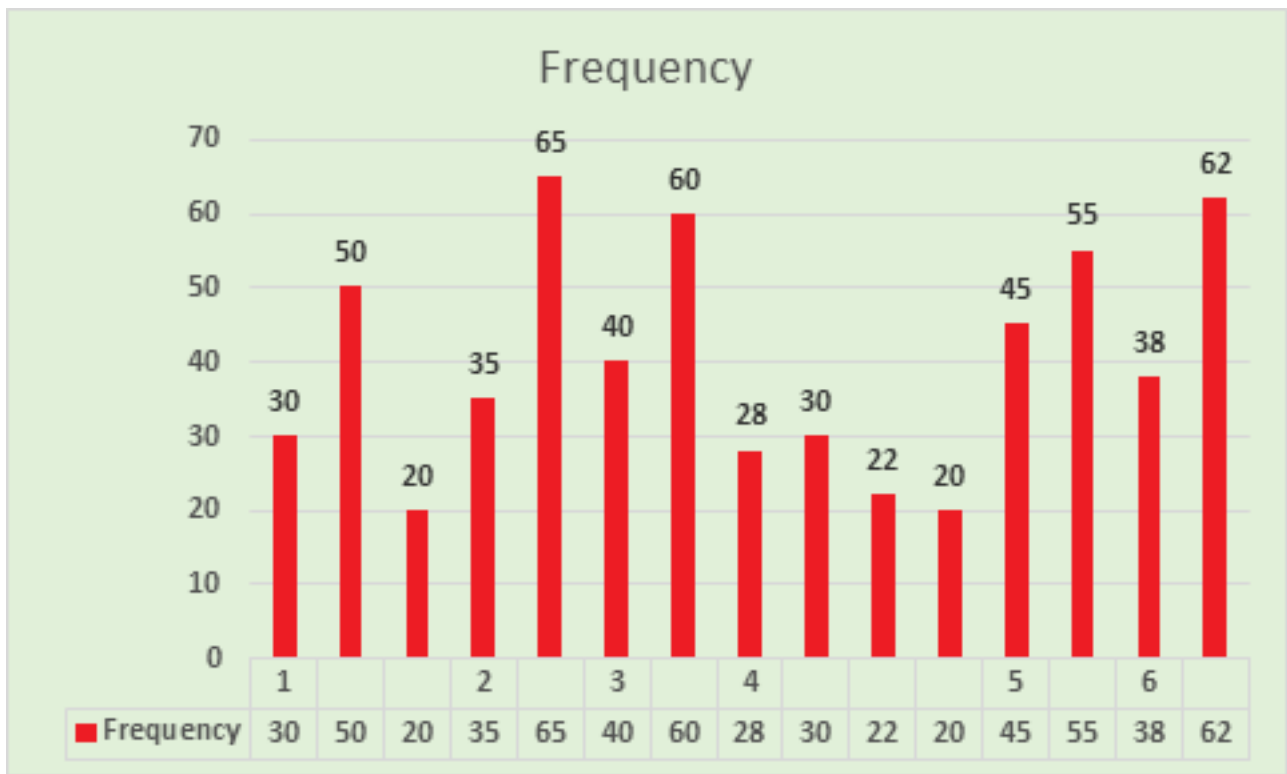


Figure 01: Demographic Characteristics

Table 02: Level of Anxiety among Nursing Students (n=100)

Level of Anxiety	Frequency	Percentage
Mild	28	28%
Moderate	48	48%
Severe	24	24%

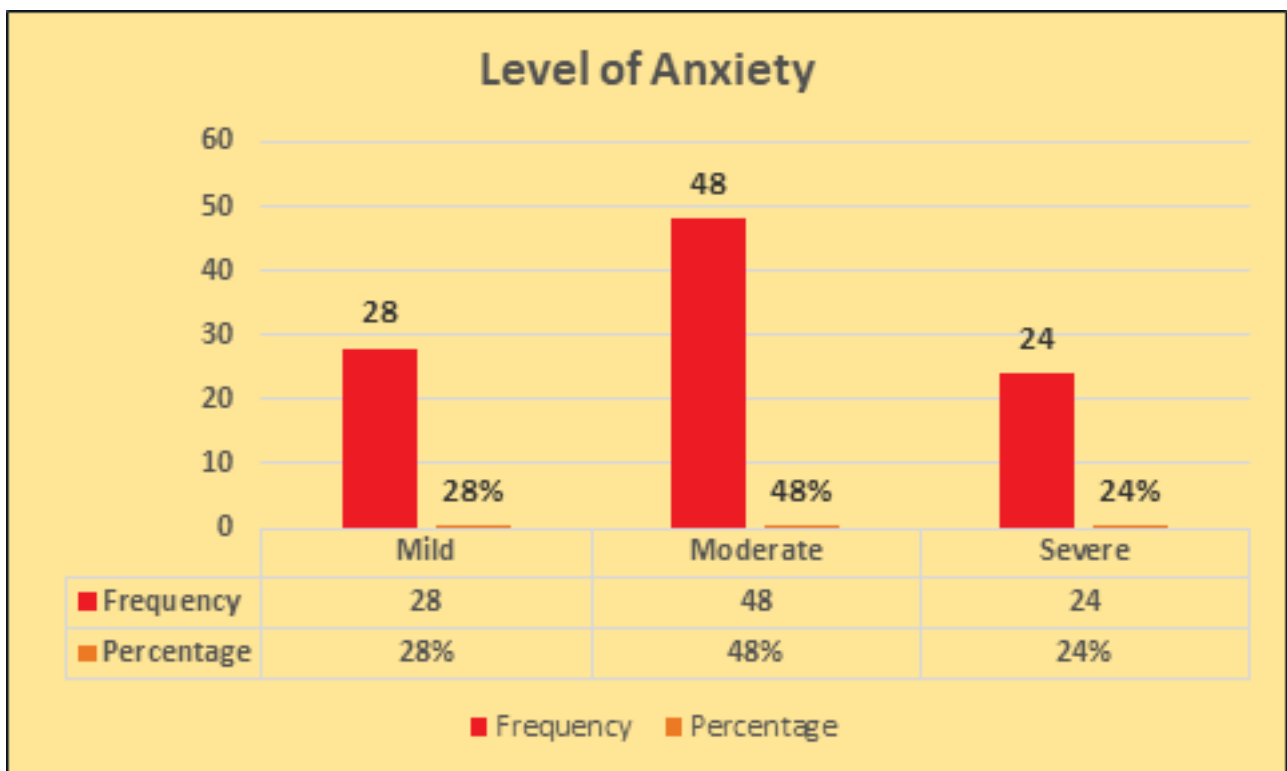


Figure 02: Level of Anxiety among Nursing Students

Table 03: Level of Perceived Stress (n=100)

Stress Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low	20	20%
Moderate	52	52%
High	28	28%

Table 04: Coping Strategies Used (n=100)

Coping Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Problem-focused	46	46%
Emotion-focused	32	32%
Avoidant coping	22	22%

Table 05: Association between Stress and Coping Strategies

Stress Level	Problem-focused	Emotion-focused	Avoidant	Total
Low	12	5	3	20
Moderate	24	18	10	52
High	10	9	9	28

Chi-square value = 6.12, $p < 0.05$ (Significant)

Discussion

The study's conclusions showed that most nursing students had moderate levels of stress and anxiety. These results are in line with other research that found significant stress levels among nursing students as a result of their clinical and academic workload.⁸

The majority of students employed problem-focused coping techniques, suggesting that they are actively attempting to manage pressures. But a sizable percentage also employed avoidant coping, which could have a detrimental impact on mental health.

The significant association between stress and coping strategies suggests that coping mechanisms play a crucial role in stress management.

Conclusion

According to the study's findings, nursing students have moderate levels of stress and anxiety. Stress management is greatly impacted by coping mechanisms. Counseling services and organized stress management programs are needed for nursing students.

Recommendations

- Stress management workshops

- Counseling services in colleges
- Regular mental health screening
- Further studies with larger samples

Financial support and sponsorship: Nil

Conflicts of interests: There is no conflict of interest

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