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Original Article

Nursing Section

Stress and Its Associated Factors among First Year Students of a University of Health Sciences in Southern India: A Descriptive Survey

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Stress is a common issue affecting individuals across various demographics. Undergraduate students in healthcare professions experience stress due to academic expectations and other reasons as well. First year students, in particular, face multiple challenges adjusting to new educational, social, and environmental demands, leading to stress that can impact well-being and academic performance.

Aim: To assess stress levels and identify factors contributing to stress among first year undergraduate students at a University of Health Sciences.

Materials and Methods: The present descriptive survey design was conducted in Mangaluru, Karnataka, India from July 2023 to May 2024. The study involved 70 first year students selected from 260 students pursuing B.Sc. Nursing, Bachelor of Physiotherapy (BPT) and Bachelor of Pharmacy (B.Pharma). Stress levels were assessed using the Student Stress Inventory (SSI), and contributing factors were measured using a structured checklist of factors, including 30 items that would assess interpersonal, intrapersonal, environmental, health, and academic factors associated with stress. Descriptive data was analysed using frequency and percentage. Chi square test was used to find association between stress, factors related to it and demographic variables.

Results: The mean age of students was 18.42±0.80 years, the majority (38.5%), were from B.Sc nursing and BPT, 64.6% were females; as for the place of residence, the majority (80.8%) were residing in hostels. Among the students, 62.3% reported mild stress, 36.9% moderate stress, and 0.8% severe stress. The study identified several factors leading to stress, including homesickness (16.5%), sleeping patterns (20.8%), academic pressure (20.8%), and concerns about grades (21.5%). A significant association was found between stress levels and selected demographic variables ($p<0.05$).

Conclusion: The present study highlights that among the first year undergraduate students, majority (62.3%) have mild and 36.9% have moderate stress. The findings underscore the need for targeted interventions and support systems to address the specific stressors students face during their initial transition into university life. Ultimately, understanding these factors is crucial for developing effective strategies to promote future healthcare professionals' mental health and academic success.

Keywords: Healthcare professionals, Mental health, Risk factors

INTRODUCTION

Stress is a common aspect that generally affects a broad range of population groups regardless of age, gender, educational status, or socioeconomic status. The students pursuing their graduation, especially the first years, undergo various educational, social, environmental, and psychological adjustment difficulties in the campus atmosphere, which may adversely affect their psychosocial well-being and learning outcomes [1]. According to World Health Organisation (WHO), stress can be defined as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a problematic situation. Stress is a natural human response that prompts us to address challenges and threats. Everyone experiences stress to some degree. However, how we respond to stress makes a big difference to our overall well-being [2].

The most common factors that affect the stress of students include academic demands, clinical sources and fear of the unknown clinical environment. Increased stress levels will adversely affect cognitive functioning and learning performance. Manageable stress is essential for students in a way that motivates them to improve their academic performance. Stress can be something that we can use to complete tasks at work [1]. In a study it was shown that the prevalence of depression was 17.03 %. It was also shown that 3.59% had low stress, 47.54% moderate stress, 37.8% had high stress and 11.06% of the students expressed severe stress, respectively [3]. Some researchers also stated that students' stress levels arise due to family problems. Family problems decrease the learning capacity and academic accomplishments of the students. They said that amongst students, stressful situations occur due to complex financial challenges, domestic responsibilities, and a heavy academic load, which leads the students to commit suicide every hour in India [4].

First year university students often experience stress due to the transition to college, academic demands, and personal challenges. The leading causes of stress among these students could be academic demands like coursework deadlines, exams, and fear of failure; transition to college like living with new people, adjusting to a new setting, and changes in eating and sleeping habits, personal challenges such as poor time management, lack of sleep, personal relationships and sociodemographic factors like gender and risky health behaviors. The impact of stress could be devastating, i.e., it can affect emotional well-being, lead to poor dietary patterns and risky health behaviors, and can cause physical and mental exhaustion [5-7].

Understanding the predictors of stress is essential to assist students in adjusting to the academic environment and for their overall well-being. Stress results in many adverse outcomes for undergraduate

students, ranging from poor academic performance and health, increased depression levels, increased alcohol use, increased drug/psycho stimulant use, lowered self-esteem and self-worth, and suicidal ideation. Students who can better cope with stress have improved academic performance, healthier eating habits, lower depression levels, and improved mood [8,9].

The educational system also plays an enabling role, subsequently leading to increased stress levels experienced by students. Some sources include overcrowded lecture halls, inadequate resources and facilities, vast syllabi, long hours, and expectations of rate learning. Fear of failure affects students, and literature also reported that increased expectations from students are one of the factors responsible for increased stress levels [10]. Given the high prevalence of stress likely identified in the present study among future healthcare professionals in South India, the findings hold significant social relevance. Understanding the stressors these first year students face is crucial for developing targeted interventions and support systems within the university environment. Addressing student stress early in their academic journey can improve mental well-being, leading to better academic performance and reduced attrition rates in health science programs. Furthermore, healthier and less stressed future healthcare professionals will likely provide higher-quality care to the community in the long run. By identifying modifiable factors associated with stress, this research can inform the development of policies and programs aimed at fostering a more supportive and conducive learning environment, ultimately benefiting both the students and the future healthcare landscape. The investigators, being health professionals, have observed students experiencing stress on their admission into a university. First year students undergo significant stress, affecting their academic and personal life. If the factors leading to stress are identified, the first year students could be helped by their teachers and mentors. Therefore, the investigators conducted the current study with the aim to assess stress levels and identify factors contributing to stress among first year undergraduate students at a University of Health Sciences.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present descriptive survey was conducted at Yenepoya Deemed to be University, Mangaluru, Karnataka, India from July 2023 to May 2024. The study participants were first year B.Sc nursing, BPT and B.Pharma students. Approval was obtained from the Scientific Review Board and the Institutional Ethics Committee for the study (Protocol No YEC1/2023/117). Formal permission was obtained from the concerned authority. The purpose of the study was explained to the subjects, informed consent was obtained, and their responses were assured of confidentiality.

Sample size calculation: The sample size was calculated [11] based on the formula, n= z^2 p(1-p)/E^2, where z= 1.96, p= 76% (p denotes the prevalence of stress) and E= 10%. With a 95% level of confidence and a 10% margin of error, 70 was calculated as the sample size.

Numerical calculation is shown as:

First calculate p(1–p):1–p=1–0.76=0.24, p(1–p)=0.76∗0.24=0.1824

Then calculate z2: z2=(1.96)2=3.84161

Then calculate E2: E2=(0.10)2=0.01

Now, put it all together: n=0.013.8416∗0.1824/0.01

n=70.014336

An initial survey was done on 260 students to assess their stress. As per the Student Stress Inventory (SSI) categorisation of stress [12], it was seen that 258 students had mild to moderate stress, and two students had severe stress. Of the 258 students, 70 were selected for the study based on a simple random sampling technique.

Inclusion criteria: Both male and female undergraduate first year students pursuing their B.Sc nursing, BPT, and B.Pharma, having mild to moderate stress were included in the study.

Exclusion criteria: Students suffering from any psychological or psychiatric problems who were diagnosed, taking psychiatric medications, and receiving counselling sessions were excluded from the study.

Study Procedure

Variables under study were the stress and the factors associated with stress among first year students and the demographic variables including age, gender, course of study, place of residence, number of siblings, educational qualification of father, educational qualification of mother, occupation of father, and occupation of mother. The data were collected using a SSI and a structured checklist to assess the factors affecting stress. SSI is a standardised tool, and investigators have obtained author permission to use it. Forty items in SSI measured the stress on a four-point Likert scale. The maximum possible score was 160, with items to assess the physical, intra-personal, interpersonal, environmental, and academic stress. As per the instructions given in the tool, a score between 40 and 80 is graded as mild stress, 81 to 121 as moderate stress, and 122 to 160 as severe stress [12].

The checklist on factors associated with stress was developed by the investigators after a thorough literature survey and it was validated by the subject experts. It had 30 items measuring the interpersonal, intrapersonal, environmental, health, and academic factors affecting stress. The demographic proforma and SSI were administered to 260 students, and the checklist was administered to 70 students with mild to moderate stress. The two students exhibiting severe stress were referred for counselling.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The data were analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0. Frequency and percentage were used to describe the baseline data and stress and associated factors. Mean, standard deviation, median, and range were computed. The Chi-square test was used to find the association of stress and factors leading to stress with selected demographic variables. Notably, a confidence interval of 95% and a significance level of 0.05 were considered for all the tests.

RESULTS

The study results showed that the mean age of students was 18.42±0.80 years and the other demographic data of students is presented in [Table/Fig-1]. The data collected regarding stress of students using SSI is presented in [Table/Fig-2-5]. Data in [Table/Fig-2] describes the physical symptoms , where it was shown that majority of students reported that they experienced physical symptoms of stress somewhat frequently or never. As per the data in [Table/Fig-3], guilt of failing to fulfil parents expectation {89(34.2%)} and parents wish for success {184(70.8%)} were reported as factors leading to stress by majority of students under interpersonal category. Under the academic factors shown in [Table/Fig-4], loss of interest towards course was never a factor for majority {155(59.6%)} the students whereas other factors were somewhat frequently leading to stress. Data in [Table/Fig-5], under the environmental factors, transport issues {101(38.8%)} and hot weather {83(31.9)} were reported as factors leading to stress by most of the students.

Further [Table/Fig-6] describes the stress score and grades of stress among students. It was seen that majority (62.3%) students reported that they had mild stress, 36.9% had moderate stress and only 0.8% students had severe stress. However, the mean stress score was 76.06±16.54. [Table/Fig-7] presents the factors leading to stress, i.e., intrapersonal, interpersonal, environmental health, and academic factors. [Table/Fig-8] describes that there was a significant association of stress with selected demographic variables ($p<0.05$). Data in [Table/Fig-9] shows that there was a significant association of factors associated with stress with selected demographic

variables (p<0.05), however, there was not a single factor leading to stress associating with education of mother, occupation of father and occupation of mother.

S. No.	Demographic characteristics	Frequency n (%)
1	**Program undergoing**	
	B.Sc nursing	100 (38.5)
	BPT	100 (38.5)
	B.Pharma	60 (23.1)
2.	**Gender**	
	Male	92 (35.4)
	Female	168 (64.6)
3.	**Place of residence**	
	Hostel	210 (80.8)
	Day Scholar	50 (19.2)
4.	**Number of siblings**	
	Single child	9 (3.5)
	Two	161 (61.9)
	More than two	90 (34.6)
5.	**Education of father**	
	No formal education	13 (5.0)
	Primary education	28 (10.8)
	High school education	117 (45.0)
	PUC or diploma	58 (22.3)
	Graduation	44 (16.9)
6.	**Education of mother**	
	No formal education	17 (6.5)
	Primary education	29 (11.2)
	High school education	121 (46.5)
	PUC or Diploma	55 (21.2)
	Graduation	38 (14.6)
7.	**Occupation of father**	
	Self-employment	107 (41.2)
	Government employed	12 (4.6)
	private employed	67 (25.8)
	Others	74 (28.5)
8.	**Occupation of mother**	
	Self employment	53 (20.4)
	Government employed	11 (4.2)
	Private employed	22 (8.5)
	Others	174 (66.9)

[Table/Fig-1]: Distribution of students according to their demographic characteristics (N=260).

S. No.	Physical symptoms	Frequency n (%)			
		Never	Somewhat frequent	Frequent	Always
1.	Headache	53 (20.38)	155 (59.6)	38 (14.6)	14 (5.4)
2	Back pain	106 (40.8)	106 (40.8)	36 (13.8)	12 (4.6)
3	Sleep problem	106 (40.8)	97 (37.3)	34 (13.1)	23 (8.8)
4	Difficulty in breathing	202 (77.7)	47 (18.1)	11 (4.2)	21 (8.1)
5	Excessive worry	107 (41.2)	84 (32.3)	48 (18.5)	21 (8.1)
6	Stomach pain/nausea	114 (43.8)	108 (41.5)	31 (11.9)	7 (2.7)
7	Constant tiredness/ fatigue	84 (32.3)	111 (42.7)	45 (17.3)	20 (7.7)
8	Sweating/sweaty hand	119 (45.8)	66 (25.4)	49 (18.8)	26 (10.0)
9	Frequent cold/flu/fever	126 (48.5)	101 (38.8)	29 (11.2)	4 (1.5)
10	Drastic weight loss	186 (71.5)	44 (16.9)	17 (6.5)	13 (5.0)

[Table/Fig-2]: Distribution of students as per the physical symptoms of stress (N=260).

S. No.	Interpersonal Items	Frequency n (%)			
		Never	Somewhat frequent	Frequent	Always
1	High parents expectations	138 (53.1)	91 (35.0)	19 (7.3)	12 (4.6)
2	Treat like helpless person	238 (91.5)	12 (4.61)	5 (1.9)	5 (1.9)
3	Guilty in fail to fulfill parents' expectation	62 (23.9)	63 (24.2)	46 (17.7)	89 (34.2)
4	Parents wish for success	46 (17.7)	15 (5.8)	15 (5.8)	184 (70.8)
5	Difficult with group mates in academic	137 (52.7)	82 (31.5)	26 (10.0)	15 (5.8)
6	Friends did not care about me	188 (72.3)	41 (15.8)	10 (3.8)	21 (8.1)
7	Disturbed problems with boy friend or girl friend	195 (75.0)	37 (14.2)	10 (3.8)	18 (6.9)
8	Family is not supportive	229 (88.1)	13 (5.0)	3 (1.2)	15 (5.8)
9	Teachers are not supportive	198 (76.2)	49 (18.8)	8 (3.1)	5 (1.9)
10	Frustrated by lack of faculty management	165 (63.5)	68 (26.2)	15 (5.8)	12 (4.6)

[Table/Fig-3]: Distribution of students as per the interpersonal items of stress (N=260).

S. No.	Academic items	Frequency n (%)			
		Never	Somewhat frequent	Frequent	Always
1	Financial problem	86 (33.1)	105 (40.4)	39 (15.0)	30 (11.5)
2	Difficulty in juggle time between study and social activity	75 (28.8)	99 (38.1)	52 (20.0)	34 (13.1)
3	Nervous delivering the class presentation	46 (17.7)	94 (36.2)	51 (19.6)	69 (26.5)
4	Stresses as submission delays	77 (29.6)	119 (45.8)	35 (13.5)	29 (11.2)
5	Stressed for sit for examination	57 (21.9)	131 (50.4)	39 (15.0)	33 (12.7)
6	Difficulty to juggle time between study and social involvement	79 (30.4)	111 (42.7)	40 (15.4)	30 (11.5)
7	Lose interest towards course	155 (59.6)	86 (33.1)	12 (4.6)	7 (2.7)
8	Burden of academic work loads	83 (31.9)	113 (43.5)	41 (15.8)	23 (8.8)
9	Stressed dealing with difficult subjects	56 (21.5)	124 (47.7)	55 (21.2)	25 (9.6)
10	Difficulty in handling my academic problem	68 (26.2)	137 (52.7)	34 (13.1)	21 (8.1)

[Table/Fig-4]: Distribution of students as per the academic items of stress (n=260).

S. No.	Environmental items	Frequency n (%)			
		Never	Somewhat frequent	Frequent	Always
1	Transportation problem	74 (28.5)	41 (15.8)	44 (16.8)	101 (38.8)
2	Stressed with bad living condition of hostel	123 (47.3)	92 (35.4)	22 (8.5)	23 (8.8)
3	Noise distraction	100 (38.5)	102 (39.2)	33 (12.7)	25 (9.6)
4	Pollution made uneasy	99 (38.1)	99 (38.1)	39 (15.0)	23 (8.8)
5	Hot weather made me avoid to go out	58 (22.3)	74 (28.5)	45 (17.3)	83 (31.9)
6	Messy living condition distracted me	91 (35.0)	89 (34.2)	43 (16.5)	37 (14.2)
7	I feel frustrate of inadequate campus facility	131 (50.4)	61 (23.5)	42 (16.2)	26 (10.0)

8	Crowding make me feel uneasy	92 (35.4)	93 (35.8)	43 (16.5)	32 (12.3)
9	Waited in a long line make me feel uneasy	79 (30.4)	87 (33.5)	39 (15.0)	55 (21.2)
10	I feel scared being at the insecure places	108 (41.5)	74 (28.5)	33 (12.7)	45 (17.3)

[Table/Fig-5]: Distribution of students as per the environmental items of stress (n=260).

S. No.	Stress scores	Grading of stress level	f (%)	Mean of stress scores Mean ±SD	Median of stress score	Range of stress scores
1	40-80	Mild Stress	162 (62.3)	76.06±16.54	76	46-131
2	81-121	Moderate Stress	96 (36.9)			
3	122-160	Severe Stress	2 (0.8)			

[Table/Fig-6]: Grading of stress and stress scores of the participants (N=260).
Maximum possible score is 160. Grading of stress is done as per Student Stress Inventory (SSI) [13].

S. No.	Item	Factor leading to stress	
		No n (%)	Yes n (%)
Intrapersonal factors			
1	Changes in eating pattern	57 (21.9)	13 (5.0)
2	Homesickness	27 (10.4)	43 (16.5)
3	Sleeping pattern	16 (6.2)	54 (20.8)
4	New responsibilities in life	21 (8.1)	49 (18.8)
5	Difficulty in paying fee	50 (19.2)	20 (7.7)
6	Lack of interest in course	38 (14.6)	32 (12.3)
Interpersonal factors			
7	Changes in social activities	39 (15.0)	31 (11.9)
8	Loss of interest in communicating with family and friends	42 (16.2)	28 (10.8)
9	Lack of cooperation from friends	37 (14.2)	33 (12.7)
10	Lack of close and intimate friends	39 (15.0)	31 (11.9)
11	Conflicts with roommates	50 (19.2)	20 (7.7)
Environmental factors			
12	New environment makes to feel stressed	35 (13.5)	35 (13.5)
13	Inadequate facilities in hostel	38 (14.6)	32 (12.3)
14	Absence of calm and quiet environment	22 (8.5)	48 (18.5)
15	Difficulty due to climate change	31 (11.9)	39 (15.0)
16	Inadequate water supply	41 (15.8)	29 (11.2)
Health factors			
17	Ill-health	33 (12.7)	37 (14.2)
18	Illness causing stress	38 (14.6)	32 (12.3)
19	Loosing sleep because of worry/tension	30 (11.5)	40 (15.4)
20	Life is entirely hopeless	47 (18.1)	23 (8.8)
Factors related to academics			
21	Studies giving you stress	16 (6.2)	54 (20.8)
22	Difficulty in completing assignment	30 (11.5)	40 (15.4)
23	Deadlines for completion	26 (10.0)	44 (16.9)
24	Feeling stress in practical requirements	36 (13.8)	34 (13.1)
25	Difficulty in communicating with teachers	41 (15.8)	29 (11.2)
26	Discrepancy between theory and practical	35 (13.5)	35 (13.5)
27	Teachers not giving fair evaluation on students	55 (21.2)	15 (5.8)
28	Worrying about bad grades	14 (5.4)	56 (21.5)
29	Difficulty to get along with other peer in group	42 (16.2)	28 (10.8)
30	Unfamiliarity with medical terms and diagnosis	31 (11.9)	39 (15.0)

[Table/Fig-7]: Distribution of students based on factors associated with stress (n=70).

S. No.	Demographic proforma	Chi-square value	p-value
1	Age (years)	218.88	1.000
2	Gender	107.10	0.003**
3	Course of study	196.951	0.001**
4	Place of residence	89.130	0.001**
5	No. of siblings	130.881	0.697
6	Education of father	276.481	0.548
7	Education of mother	294.791	0.260
8	Occupation of father	189.654	0.840
9	Occupation of mother	177.562	0.949

[Table/Fig-8]: Association of stress scores with the selected demographic variables (n=70).
**Highly significant

S. No.	Demographic proforma	Factors associated with stress	Chi-square value; p-value
1	Age (years)	Sleep	χ^2=10.32; p=0.01**
2	Gender	Headache	χ^2=8.73; p=0.01**
		Excessive worry	χ^2=11.25; p=0.001***
		Constant tiredness	χ^2=24.72; p=0.001***
		Guilty to fulfill the parents hope	χ^2=10.62; p=0.03*
		Intimate friends	χ^2=6.20; p=0.02*
		Deadlines	χ^2=5.57; p=0.01**
3	Course of study	Sleep problem	χ^2=20.32;p=0.001***
		Paying of fees	χ^2=6.34; p=0.04*
		Practical requirements	χ^2=8.26; p=0.01**
		Social activities	χ^2=7.49; p=0.001***
		Intimate friends	χ^2=21.45; p=0.01**
		Conflict with roommates	χ^2=14.34; p=0.02 *
4	Place of residence	Difficulty in getting along with roommates	χ^2=7.88; p=0.03*
5	No. of siblings	Guilty of failing to fulfill parents' hope	χ^2=13.88; p=0.04*
6	Education of father	High parent expectation	χ^2=24.96 ;p=0.01**

[Table/Fig-9]: Association of factors associated with stress and demographic variables.
*Significant; **Highly significant; *** Very highly significant

DISCUSSION

The present study was undertaken to assess the stress and factors associated with it among first year students at a University of Health Sciences. The findings of the present study show that the majority (62.3%) of students reported that they had mild stress, 36.9% had moderate stress and only 0.8% students had severe stress. The findings are consistent with those of a study where the student nurses had mild and moderate stress. Yet another study showed that nearly 53% of the students had some degree of stress, with 37.4% experiencing moderate to severe stress levels [13]. Another survey among nursing students showed that 39 students (19.5%) reported moderate stress, while 26 (13%) reported severe to extremely severe stress [14]. The present study's findings revealed several interpersonal, environmental, health, and academic-related factors associated with stress among first year students. A study [15] found that academic stressors contribute to overall stress among students adjusting to the local language perhaps inter-institutional differences in the living conditions of hostels, their infrastructure (e.g., size of rooms, number of roommates, cleanliness of the hostel, canteen facilities), social support systems and social environment of the hostels were also the factors leading to stress among students.

The findings of the present study revealed that there is a significant association of stress score with gender (χ^2=107.10, p<0.05), course of study (χ^2=196.951, p<0.05), and place of residence (χ^2=89.130, p<0.05), these findings are supported by a previous study [16]. There was no significant association between level of

teenage stress, gender, religion and type of family. (p<0.05). Another study's [17] findings supported the current study findings, where a significant association of level of stress score was found with age, total monthly income of the family, and residence of the study subjects with (p=0.008), (p=0.027), and (p=0.0001), respectively. At the same time, the present study findings are contradicted as no association was found between stress scores with other demographic variables like gender (p=0.113) and type of family (p=0.429) at a 0.05 significance level [17]. It was also shown that the prevalence of stress among medical students, as per the Medical Student Stressor Questionnaire (MSSQ), was 93.75% among the participants. The most common stressors identified by the students included difficulty in covering positions daily, less time for repeated learning, increased workload towards exams, and the need to be more responsible. Other factors were a lack of time for requirement completion, expanded syllabus and a tired feeling after a tight schedule [18].

Another study findings supported the current study findings revealed that among students aged 18-39, stress scores varied between 0 and 16; elevated stress was significantly associated with female sex, country of origin, residing on campus, eating when bored, lack of self-discipline, disturbed sleep, and low levels of life satisfaction. Furthermore, students with Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) 4 scores above the median level were 2,3 times more likely to report difficulty concentrating on academic work. The study concluded elevated stress levels are present in university students in Qatar [19]. Another study supported the current study findings, revealing that 25% of students had mild stress, 36.7% had moderate stress, and 38.3% had severe stress. In the post-test, 25% of students had very mild stress, 48.3% had mild stress, and 26.7% had moderate stress. Also, there is a statistically significant association with sociodemographic variables such as the mother's education, father's education, family income per month, type of family, and awareness about the nursing profession [20]. Another study found that long working hours, difficulty of academic work, poor study methods, and family illness caused considerable stress. Family pressure to pay for necessities at home was also a factor that caused stress among the students. There was insufficient money to pay for textbooks for their studies, which were the factors associated with stress among students [17].

Limitation(s)

The study was conducted among students of only three programs at a single University at a demographic location. Therefore, generalisation of the study findings is limited.

CONCLUSION(S)

The present study findings indicate that the academic pressures, including the demanding curriculum and frequent evaluations, emerged as prominent stressors for this cohort. Social adjustment to the university environment and separation from familiar support systems also significantly affected the perceived stress levels. Transition to University as a major life stressor - leaving home and staying in hostel and adjusting to new social environment is a challenge. Furthermore, individual factors such as coping mechanisms and pre-existing vulnerabilities likely influenced the students' stress experiences. These findings underscore the importance of recognising the unique stressors faced by first year health science students during their transition to university. Implementing targeted interventions and support systems promotes their well-being and facilitates successful academic integration.

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