

Awareness And Utilization Of Stress Management Interventions Among Health Care Professionals in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka

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Abstracts: The aim of this study was to explore the Awareness and Utilization of stress management interventions among health care professionals in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. Four research questions guided the study and a descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 156 health participants and the whole population was used because the population was small. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire which was validated by three experts from the Faculty of Education. The researcher employed the use of Cronbach's alpha for the reliability of the instrument and the result yielded a 0.83 reliability. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics that is percentage analysis scores. The findings of the study revealed that the health care professional staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka are aware of stress management interventions techniques with 94.7%, 84.0% and 87.6%, that the respondents barely utilize stress management interventions (4.9%). The health care professional staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka agree that lack of time or scheduling constraints are barriers to utilization and sustaining stress management interventions (93.8%), and that they also agree that limited access to resources or support is a barrier to utilization and sustaining stress management interventions (83.1%). From the results of the study, it was recommended amongst others that Institutions should also establish a student-led club for upcoming health professionals that meets regularly to practice stress management interventions and discuss its benefits and workshops or seminars should be organized on stress management interventions, led by experienced instructors or mental health professionals.

Keywords: Awareness, Utilization, Stress, Stress Management and Interventions

INTRODUCTION

Healthcare Professionals or workers (HCWS) worldwide, experience exceptionally high levels of occupational stress, leading to serious individual, organizational, and societal problems. Health Care Professionals are any licensed individual in the field of health whose aim is focused on the well-being of their patients. According to the American Medical Association (AMA), 2020), a healthcare professional is anyone suited by education, training and the necessary licensing to perform a medical service. They further stated that these professionals examine, diagnose, treat and prevent injuries, illnesses and other

impairments. These health professionals are the backbone of the social and healthcare management force since they are responsible for promoting health, preventing the spread of disease, and providing healthcare services to children, adults, families, and communities in accordance with the primary healthcare strategy. The global advent of the novel coronavirus in 2020 further showed the crucial nature of healthcare providers and professionals in driving public health objectives. However, based on the intensive care that healthcare professionals provide inside and outside health facilities, they are often exposed to physical and emotional stress, which can inhibit their productivity and performance if not well-managed, and this is where stress management comes into play (Akuezilo, 2017).

Stress Management can be defined as approaches, strategies and interventions aimed at eliminating unnecessary stress that will negatively affect ones' health. This unnecessary stress are related to depression, anxiety, mood swings low self esteem, aggressiveness, impatient. Every human being experiences stress which is unavoidable due to major life changes, work or school problems, relationship difficulties, therefore, managing our stress would help us adapt and cope in any stressful situation we find ourselves in. The American Psychological Association (APA), 2023 opined that Stress is a normal reaction to everyday pressures, but can become unhealthy when it upsets your day-to-day functioning. Stress involves changes affecting nearly every system of the body, influencing how people feel and behave. Charles (2019) reviewed that the general prevalence rate of stress among health care workers in Nigeria was estimated at 61.97%, using random effect model. Current systematic reviews and meta-analyses on interventions for stress reduction and prevention in healthcare professionals have shown that many different interventions are available with varying levels of effectiveness.

However most research on stress management interventions suggest that individual and organizational solutions are ideally combined to obtain greater improvements in well-being. Interventions should be easily accessible at work, and that digital technologies, cognitive behavioural therapies, mindfulness training relaxation, exercise programs as well as other techniques such as health education, may be promising support tools in stress prevention (DeFrank & Cooper, 2017). Not managing stress well by the health care professionals, has led to burnout not only results in negative health consequences for the individual. It also leads to lower patient safety, poorer patient care, lower professionalism, more work place injuries management and higher absenteeism. Therefore, developing and evaluating an effective stress management interventions or health professionals, either at individual level or organizational-level, will help

reduce the stress related diseases (SRDS) and through stress management, will enable workers in field of health to cope with occupational stress (Davis, 2023).

Despite the available evidence, it seems that the creation of a safe and healthy work environment has not been high on the agenda of employers in the health sector especially in developing countries like Nigeria. International labour organization (ILO) stated that approximately two (2) million people die every year from occupational hazards, work related stress and injuries (Singh, et al, 2020). In Nigeria, the stress among doctors has been studied to increase during their residency program as confirmed in a Nigerian study with 50% resident doctors reporting extreme stress. This is considered a major problem hence the focus of this study on tertiary hospitals in Anambra state. Occupational stress further impacts not only on the wellbeing of HCWs but also leads to insurance cost, decreased productivity, absenteeism, low morale which students or patients encounter in school medicals in Anambra state university. DeFrank & Cooper, (2017) concluded that for the employees, ie health care workers to remain motivated as well as to boost their jobs satisfaction, the employers should provide a good environment, in the sense that the employee should provide a stress management skill or coping strategies which they're yet to provide up till date. Despite the availability of various stress management interventions, there may be limited awareness and underutilization of these resources among health care professionals. This could be due to factors such as lack of knowledge about available interventions, stigma associated with seeking help, time constraints, or perceived ineffectiveness of the interventions. Nnenna (2022) commented on Unizik medical blogs that they have rude old nurses in Unizik medicals, always taking their angers out on students who do not feel well. This is as a result of low stress management. Awareness and Utilization of stress management interventions for these health professionals, in University, should be bring about quality productivity in services being rendered to patients.

The main Purpose of the study is to explore the knowledge and use of stress management interventions among healthcare professionals. Specifically, the study sought to find out if ;

- 1) Health care professionals in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka are aware of stress management interventions
- 2) To examine the usefulness of the interventions among healthcare professionals in Nnamdi Azikiwe university, Awka
- 3) To assess the utilization of stress management interventions among health care professionals staffs in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka

- 4) To identify possible barriers to utilizing and sustaining stress management interventions among health care professionals in Nnamdi Azikiwe university, Awka.

Research Questions

The following research questions, will guide the study

1. What stress management interventions are health care professional staffs in Nnamdi Azikiwe university Awka aware of?
2. What are the usefulness of these Interventions among health care professionals in Nnamdi Azikiwe university Awka?
3. What is the rate of utilization of stress management interventions among health care professionals in Nnamdi Azikiwe university Awka?
4. What are the barriers to utilizing and sustaining stress management interventions among health care professionals in Nnamdi Azikiwe university Awka?

Transactional Model of Stress and Coping by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) was used in this study. The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping is a framework for evaluating the processes of coping with stressful events. The Model is useful for health education. health promotion and disease prevention according to Glanz, Rimer, & Viswanath, (2008).

Stressors are demands made by both internal and external environments that upset the balance of an individual, thus affecting both physical and psychological wellbeing and requiring action to restore balance. The Model of stress they proposed was based on the consideration that stress is a transactional phenomenon which is dependent on the meaning the perceiver gives the stressor or stimulus. In other words, the person under stress firstly appraises the situation and gives it a meaning, thereafter; he considers the resources at his disposal for the management of the situation. The resources according to Lazarus could be social or cultural Chan., dkk (2025).

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted was descriptive survey research method. A survey study is a method of investigation or studying a particular demographic to gain insight about them (Nworgu, 2006). The study was carried out in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State - South-East of Nigeria. Nnamdi Azikiwe University came into being as an offshoot of the defunct Anambra State University of Technology (ASUTECH). The population of the study was made up of 156 health care professionals working at

the Medical Section (medicals) of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. (Source: Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Medical Centre).

The sample size consisted of the 156 health care professionals working at the Medical Section (medicals) of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. No sampling technique was used because the researcher made use of the total population of the study. The research instrument used for data collection for this research is a structured questionnaire, which was designed by the researcher. The questionnaire was titled "Questionnaire on awareness and utilization of Stress Management Interventions for Health Care Professional Staff in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State (QAUSMIHCPSNAU)". The questionnaire was designed based on the aspect of the research questions.

The reliability of the instrument was tested by administering 20 copies to some health professionals outside the area of the study. The data obtained from the administered questionnaire were analyzed. Cronbach alpha method was used to analyze the utilization of stress management intervention while Kuder Richardson (Kr20) was used to check for the awareness of these stress management intervention among the health professionals. The result of the analysis gave 0.89 and 0.77 coefficients respectively.

The data for the study or questionnaire were collected and the answers gathered were analysed using statistical method that is percentage score analysis. The cut-off point for accepting percentage was put at 50%, with the decision rule that any percentage score from 50% and above was taken as agreed while percentage scores below 50% was taken as disagreed.

Research Question 1: What stress management interventions are health care professional staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka aware of?

Table 1: Percentage analysis of the awareness of stress management interventions among health care professional staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka.

N=156

	N	Yes %	Remark	N	No %	Remark
1. Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)	144	94.7	Agreed	12	5.3	Disagree
2. Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT)	144	94.7	greed	12	5.3	Disagree
3. Relaxation techniques						

(e.g. deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation)	120	84.0	Agreed	36	16.0	Disagree
4. Exercise and physical activity.	128	87.6	Agreed	28	12.4	Disagree
5. Seeking social support (e.g. talking to family, colleagues and friends).	144	94.7	Agreed	12	5.3	Disagree

Analysis in Table 1 shows that the respondents has high percentage in all the questions asked (94.7%, 94.7%, 84.0%, 87.6%, and 94.7% respectively), showing that the health care professional staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe university Awka are aware of stress management interventions techniques. However, some of the respondents in the same question numbers mentioned above are not aware of stress management interventions techniques (5.3%, 5.3%, 16.0%, 12.4%, and 5.3%, respectively).

Research Question 2: What are the usefulness of these interventions among health care professionals of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka?

Table 2: Percentage analysis of the usefulness of these interventions among health care professionals of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka.

N=156

	N	Yes %	Remark	N	No %	Remark
6. Reduced stress and burnout.	142	93.8	Agreed	14	6.2	Disagree
7. Improve mental health and well-being.	118	83.1	Agreed	38	16.9	Disagree
8. Improved relationships with colleagues and patients.	142	93.8	Agreed	14	6.2	Disagree
9. Increase job satisfaction and engagement.	11	4.9	Disagree	145	95.1	Agreed
10. Reduced						

absenteeism and presentism (being present but not fully productive).	131	88.9	Agreed	25	11.1	Disagree
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Analysis in Table 2 shows that the health care professional staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe university Awka agreed in questions 6, 7, 8, and 10 (83.1 – 95.1%), indicating that they are aware of the usefulness of these intervention techniques. However, the respondents did not agree that the management interventions techniques increases job satisfaction and engagement (4.9%).

Research Question 3: What is the rate of utilization of stress management interventions among health care professionals of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka?

Table 3: Percentage analysis of the utilization of stress management interventions among health care professionals of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka.

N=156						
	N	Yes %	Remark	N	No %	Remark
11. Do the health care professionals make use of these stress management interventions?	100	94.6	Agreed	56	6.4	Disagree
12. Do they use it regularly?	148	96.4	Disagree	8	3.6	Agreed
13. Do they use it at workplace?	25	6.7	Disagree	131	93.3	Agreed
14. Do they make use of it at home at times?	131	93.3	Agreed	25	6.7	Disagree
15. Does their time influence the utilization of stress management interventions?	136	91.1	Agreed	20	8.9	Disagree

Analysis in Table 3 shows that the respondents agreed in question 11, 14 and 15 to 28 (91% to 96.4%). This showed that the respondents barely utilize stress

management interventions. However, the health care professional staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka do not use stress management intervention techniques at workplace.

Research Question 4: What are the barriers to utilizing and sustaining stress management interventions among health care professionals of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka?

Table 4: Percentage analysis of the barriers to utilizing and sustaining stress management interventions among health care professionals of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka.

N=156

	N	Yes %	Remark	N	No %	
16. Lack of time or scheduling constraints.	142	93.8	Agreed	14	6.2	Disagree
17. High workload patient volume.	142	93.8	Agreed	14	6.2	Disagree
18. Limited access to resources or support.	118	83.1	Agreed	38	16.9	Disagree
19. Stigma or shame associated with seeking help.	145	95.1	Agreed	11	4.9	Disagree
20. Limited awareness or knowledge of stress management techniques.	25	11.1	Disagree	131	88.9	Agreed

Analysis in Table 4 shows that the health care professional staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka agreed to almost all the questions asked on the barriers to utilization and sustaining stress management interventions (93.8%, 93.8%, 83.1%, and 95.1% respectively). Moreover, they did not agree that limited awareness or knowledge of stress management techniques is a barrier to utilization and sustaining stress management interventions. (11.1%).

Discussion of Findings

What stress management interventions are health care professional staff in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka aware of?

From the table one showing stress management intervention among health care professional staffs in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, it was discovered that majority of the health care professional staffs in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka agreed that Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) is one of the stress management intervention that they are aware of Chan, A. A. S., et.al (2025). The respondents also agreed that they are aware that Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT) also serves as a stress management intervention. Relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation) were also agreed by the respondents as management interventions for stress. Finally, Exercise and physical activity and Seeking social support (e.g. talking to family, colleagues and friends) are also stress management interventions that can be employed for managing stress. This findings are in line with the study by Sindhu and Arnitha (2012). They noted that a personal approach can be adopted in the workplace to cope with stress. This has to do with the adjustment of how individuals react or respond to work situations. In order to maintain excellent health, it is crucial to consume a balanced diet, get adequate sleep, and engage in regular exercise. These actions aid in preventing some of the negative effects of stress and in coping with its symptoms. Coping with stress in an organization, therefore, necessitates the universal acceptance of this personal approach.

What is the rate of utilization of stress management interventions among health care professionals in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka?

Results in Table 3 shows that the respondents agreed in items stated in the table which showed that the respondents barely utilize stress management interventions. Norito, T. B., & Chan, A. A. S. (2025) These items include questions on if the health care professionals make use of these stress management interventions, questions about how regularly these stress management interventions are used and questions regarding if these professionals make use of these stress management interventions at home at times. The respondents gave a positive response to all the questions asked except the question where they were inquired if they used the interventions regularly. To another question on if their time influences the utilization of stress management interventions, the respondents also gave a positive response. However, the health care professional staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka do not use stress management intervention techniques at workplace. This is not in line with Ellie Macdonald (2024) who says that Taking short breaks throughout the day is

essential in maintaining focus and reducing stress levels. Step away from your workspace, stretch your legs, take deep breaths, or engage in short mindfulness exercises. These brief moments of respite can restore your energy levels and enhance your productivity.

What are the barriers to utilizing and sustaining stress management interventions among health care professionals in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka?

For the table three, the findings gave the barriers to utilizing and sustaining stress management interventions among health care professionals in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. In the study, the barriers to utilizing and sustaining stress management interventions among health care professionals in Nnamdi Azikiwe university Awka are a lack of time or scheduling constraints for the health professionals, high workload patient volume for the health care professionals, limited access to resources or support for the health care professionals, stigma or shame associated with seeking help from experts by these health professionals and finally, the barrier of limited awareness or knowledge of stress management techniques among these health professionals in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. This concurs with the study by Ezinne , Birute , Arturas, Rasa and Cesar (2023) who reported in their study that Substantial barriers exist for Employee Assistance Program (EAPs) to engage employers in primary prevention related to workplace stress and lack of knowledge regarding intervention methods, is one of the barriers that play into the difficulty of functioning in this manner.

CONCLUSION

From the findings of the study, the researcher came up with the conclusion that many of the health care professionals of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka are aware of the stress management intervention and the usefulness of these interventions for stress reduction. The findings also included the fact that the health care professionals of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka do not utilize these stress managements interventions in their workplace although some of the professionals make use of it in their homes. Finally from the study, it was concluded that the barriers to the utilization and sustenance of these stress management intervention comes in various forms and the barriers listed by the researcher in the last table are not left out.

Implications Of The Study

The implications of this study include creating an awareness of stress management interventions, examining the usefulness of these interventions, assessing the utilization of these stress management interventions and identifying possible barriers to utilizing and sustaining stress management interventions among health care professionals in Nnamdi Azikiwe university, Awka.

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