

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY TO ASSESS THE PERCEIVED STRESS AND COPING STRATEGIES AMONG CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLIC DEPENDENTS IN URBAN AREAS OF BANGALORE

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Abstract

Alcoholism has become a major problem in India which is there across all societies. This alcoholic problem is not only affecting the person himself, but also the family members especially the children surrounding him. The aim of the study was to assess the perceived stress and coping strategies among the children of alcoholic dependents in urban areas of Bangalore. Assess the level of perceived stress among children of alcoholic dependents. Assess the coping strategies used by children of alcoholic dependents. Find out the relationship between the perceived stress and coping strategies among children of alcoholic dependents. Determine an association between the perceived stress and selected socio demographic variables of children of alcoholic dependents. Determine an association between the coping strategies and selected socio demographic variables of children of alcoholic dependents. A non-experimental, descriptive survey was selected for the study. The participants were 100 children of alcoholic dependents of Bangalore. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was used to select the samples for the study. Modified Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale, Sheldon Cohen's perceived stress scale, Folkman and Lazarus scales were used to collect data from the subjects. The obtained data was analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics and interpreted in terms of objectives and hypothesis of the study. The level of significance was set at 0.05 levels. It was observed that the majority (79%) of the respondents had moderate levels of stress. The remaining (21%) had low stress and none of them had high stress. A significant association was found between perceived stress and demographic variables are gender, marital status of parents, occupation of family head, family income. A significant association was found between coping scores and demographic variables are gender, stay at present and occupation of family head, family income, and duration of alcoholism. The mean perceived stress scores of children of alcoholic dependents found to be 85.62, with the mean percentage of (63.0%) and a standard deviation of 8.5. The mean coping score is found to be 89.12, with the mean percentage of (65.5%) and a standard deviation of 8.2. There exists a significant positive correlation between the perceived stress and the coping scores of Children of alcoholic dependents.

Keywords: Alcoholism, Perceived Stress, Coping, Socio-demographic variables, Descriptive design

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INTRODUCTION

Alcohol and drug related problems are not new in India. Alcohol is still the most widely used intoxicant in our country. It is a major problem in India which is there across all societies.¹ Alcoholism is a progressive family disease that affects not only the alcoholic, but also every member

of the family. Children growing up in this environment are negatively affected and as such tends to have a particularly difficult time in life. COA (Children of Alcoholics) are at greater risk for having emotional problems than children whose parents are not alcoholic. They believe that they are unworthy of love, and therefore unlovable, rejected, abandoned, left alone in a cold harsh world. COA tends to be very serious in their approach to life and often lack spontaneity, playfulness and joy. Children have common symptoms like low self-esteem, loneliness, guilt, feeling of helplessness, fears of abandonment, chronic depression. They often feel a high level of tension and stress. Young children of alcoholics may have frequent nightmares, bed wetting and crying. They also may not have friends and may be afraid to go to school. Older COA may show such depressive symptoms as obsessive perfectionism, hoarding, staying by them or being excessively self-conscious. So, Parents role are very important in the development of a child which is lacking in an alcoholic family.²

NEED FOR THE STUDY

WHO estimates that there are about 2 billion people worldwide who consume alcoholic beverages and 76.3 million with diagnosable alcohol disorder. Globally alcohol causes 3.2% of all deaths (1.8 million deaths) and 4% Disability - Adjusted Life Years (58.3 million Disability Adjusted life years). This proportion is much higher in males (5.6% deaths and 6.5% of Disability Adjusted life years) than females (0.6% deaths and 1.3% Disability Adjusted Life years). The effects of alcohol consumption by an individual are noticeable in all spheres: physical, psychological, social and economical of an individual's life. It affects the entire family, has strong negative effects on marital relationships and interrupts a child's normal development. The children of alcoholics are at higher risk for emotional, physical and mental health problems. In addition, children of alcoholics are 3 to 4 times more likely than others to become addicted to alcohol.³

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. Assess the level of perceived stress among children of alcoholic dependents.
2. Assess the coping strategies used by children of alcoholic dependents.
3. Find out the relationship between the perceived stress and coping strategies among children of alcoholic dependents.
4. Determine an association between the perceived stress and selected socio demographic variables of children of alcoholic dependents.
5. Determine an association between the coping strategies and selected socio demographic variables of children of alcoholic dependents.

ASSUMPTIONS

1. Stress and coping strategies of children of alcoholic dependents can be assessed.
2. Children experience stress related to disturbance in family function due to alcoholism of their parent.
3. Children experience an altered coping related to their stress which affects their day today life due to alcoholism of their parent

HYPOTHESIS

The following hypothesis will be tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H₁: There is a significant correlation between the perceived stress and the coping strategies of children of alcoholic dependents.

H₂: There is a significant association between the perceived stress and selected socio demographic variables of children of alcoholic dependent

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Assess: It refers to the process used to identify the level of perceived stress and coping of children of alcoholic dependents in urban areas.

Perceived Stress: In this study, perceived stress refers to a physical, mental or emotional response to events that causes bodily or mental tension. It is any outside force or event that has an effect on the body or mind.

Coping strategy: Coping refers to the thoughts and actions used to deal with stress. Coping strategy is the behavior that helps to function better in a given situation.

Children of alcoholic dependents: It refers to children whose parent uses alcohol in such a way that it causes problem in the child's life.

Urban Area: It refers to the geographical part which consists of city or town

Selected Socio demographic variables: It refers to gender, educational status, marital status of parent, occupation of family, stay at present family environment, religion, income of the children of alcoholics.

CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK

The conceptual framework of the present study was developed by the investigator based on Betty Neuman's System model. Betty Neuman took the concepts of the system's model from Gestalt's theory and General system's theory which proposes that the dynamic interaction of an individual and the situation determines experience and behavior. It also perceives that world is made up of systems that are interconnected and are influenced by each other. So, in this study, it highlights that children of alcoholic dependents are influenced by the level of stressors and also their coping pattern depends on the level of prevention they are able to achieve.

Delimitations

The study is delimited to:

- assessment of stress and coping strategies only as the responses given by the subjects to the items in the tool.
- subjects from the selected urban areas in Bangalore

METHODOLOGY

Research approach: The study was based on a descriptive survey approach.

Research design: Non-experimental descriptive survey design.

Variables: According to **Polit and Hungler (1999)**, A variable is the name implies something that varies. A variable is any quality of an organization, situation that takes different values". Variable is an attribute of a person that varies and it takes on different values.

Study variables: In the present study, the researcher is interested to measure two variables of interest namely perceived stress and coping strategies among the Children of alcoholic dependents

Demographic variables: In the present study the attribute variables that are being described are gender, religion, educational status of child, marital status of parents, occupation of head of family, family income, stay at present, family environment, presence of alcoholic parent and if present, relationship with the parents, duration of alcoholism and treatment provided.

Setting of the study: This study has been conducted on children of alcoholic dependents which is conducted at selected community areas at Hegde Nagar, Urban areas of Bangalore.

Population: Target population for the present study comprises of Children of alcoholic dependents from the selected community areas of Hegde Nagar, Urban areas of Bangalore.

Sample size: A total number of 100 children of alcoholic dependents who met the inclusion criteria were selected by using non probability purposive sampling technique.

Sampling Technique: For the present study depending on the nature of the problem a non-probability purposive sampling technique was used.

SAMPLING CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF SAMPLE

Inclusion criteria: The study includes children of alcoholic dependents

1. in the age group of 13-19 years.
2. from selected urban areas.
3. able to communicate in English or Kannada.
4. willing to participate in the study.
5. who are available at the time of data collection.

Exclusion criteria: The study excludes children of alcoholic dependents

1. age group below 13 and above 19 years.
2. having psychiatry problems such as depression or mood disorders.

SELECTION OF TOOL AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOOL

The tool used to collect data from the samples comprises three sections. Section –I Socio demographic Performa, Section- II- Perceived Stress Rating Scale, Section- III- coping strategy assessment Scale. The tools were validated by experts. The reliability of the perceived stress scale and the coping scale was established by split half method. The reliability coefficient of the perceived stress scale was found to be $r = 0.9459$ and the reliability coefficient of coping scale is $r = 0.976$. Ethics committee approved the study and informed consent was obtained from every participant prior to interview.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

1. Permission was obtained from the Research committee of Faran College of Nursing.
2. Permission was obtained from the Ethical committee
3. Permission for pilot and main study was taken from the concerned authority of selected area
4. Written consent was taken from the subject.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

1. A formal administrative permission was obtained from the concerned authorities of PHC of Hedge Nagar, urban area.
2. The data was collected during the months of January 15 to January 25, December 2012. The tool used to collect data from the samples comprises three sections. Section –I Socio demographic Performa, Section- II- Perceived Stress Rating Scale, Section- III- coping strategy assessment Scale.

The tools were validated by experts.

The reliability of the perceived stress scale and the coping scale was established by split half method. The reliability coefficient of the perceived stress scale was found to be $r = 0.9459$ and the reliability coefficient of coping scale is $r = 0.976$.

Ethics committee approved the study and informed consent was obtained from every participant prior to interview

PLAN FOR DATA ANALYSIS

The plan of data analysis are as follows:

- ❖ The data were analyzed in terms of the objectives of the study using descriptive and inferential statistics.
- ❖ Following data collection, the data was consolidated and organized in a master data sheet.
- ❖ The demographic variables were described descriptively in terms of frequency and percentage
- ❖ A coefficient of correlation test would be done to determine the relationship between the perceived stress and coping strategies among COA.
- ❖ A chi-square (χ^2) test would be done to determine the association between the perceived stress and the selected socio-demographic variables of COA and also with coping and selected demographic variables of COA.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Frequency and percentage were used in the study, the demographic variables of. to gender, educational status, marital status of parent, occupation of family, stay at present family environment, religion, income of the children of alcoholics.

Mean and standard deviation were used to determine perceived stress and coping strategies among the Children of alcoholic dependents

Inferential Statistics

- ❖ The coefficient of correlation (r) was used to assess the relation between the perceived stress and coping of COA.
- ❖ A chi-square (χ^2) test was done to determine the association between the perceived stress and the selected socio-demographic variables of COA and also with coping and selected demographic variables of COA. The level of significance for hypothesis testing was set at 0.05 level of significance

RESULTS

TABLE-1: Distribution of subjects according to socio demographic characteristics(n=100)

Demo- graphic Variables	Category	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Gender	Male	48	48
	Female	52	52
Religion	Hindu	20	20
	Muslim	34	34
	Christian	46	46
Marital Status of parents	Living together	84	84
	Living apart	16	16
Educational Status	No formal Education	6	6
	Secondary	18	18
	Higher Secondary	51	51
	Graduate	25	25
Stay Present	Stay at Home	93	93
	Hostel	3	3
	Relatives	4	4
Family Environment	Supportive Friendly	31	31
	Non-supportive and Hostile	20	20
	Adjustable	49	49
Occupation - Family Head	Self employed	16	16
	Private	33	33
	Government	26	26
	Daily wages	25	25
Family Income/month	Below Rs.10,000	55	55
	Rs.10,001-20,000	37	37
	Rs.20,001-30,000	8	8
Duration of Alcoholism	1-2 years	53	53
	3-5 years	21	21
	6+ years	26	26

TABLE--2: Classification of Respondents Stress Level of Alcoholic Dependents (n=100)

Stress Level	Category	Respondents	
		Number	Percentage (%)
Low	≤ 50 % Score	21	21.0
Moderate	51-75 % Score	79	79.0
High	> 75 % Score	0	0.0

Total		100	100.0
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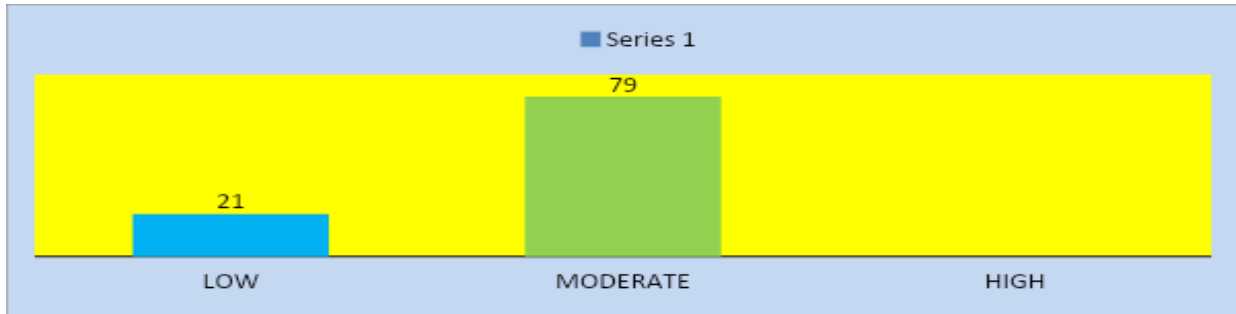


Figure 1: Bar diagram representing classification of respondents stress level of alcoholic dependents.

Table 3: Classification of Respondents Coping Level on Alcoholic Dependents

(n=100)

Coping Level	Category	Respondents	
		Number	Percentage (%)
Low	≤ 50 % Score	16	16.0
Moderate	51-75 % Score	84	84.0
High	> 75 % Score	0	0.0
Total		100	100.0

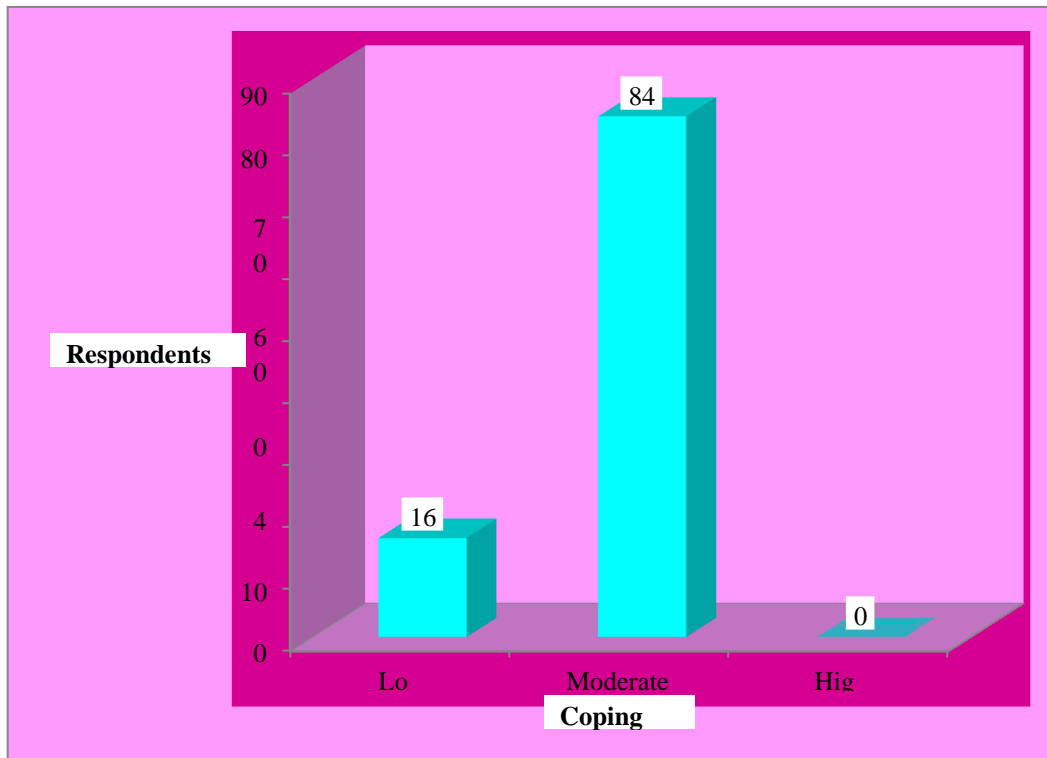


TABLE-4: Relationship between Stress and Coping Scores of Respondents on Alcoholic Dependents (N=100)

Aspects	Max. Score	Response				Correlation (r)
		Mean	SD	Mean(%)	SD (%)	
Stress	136	85.62	11.5	63.0	8.5	+ 0.597*
Coping	136	89.12	11.1	65.5	8.2	

*Significant at 5% Level

Inference: The coefficient of correlation (r) is found to be 0.597 at 0.05 level of significance. So the null hypothesis was rejected and the research hypothesis was accepted which states that there exists a significant positive correlation between the perceived stress and coping of COA.

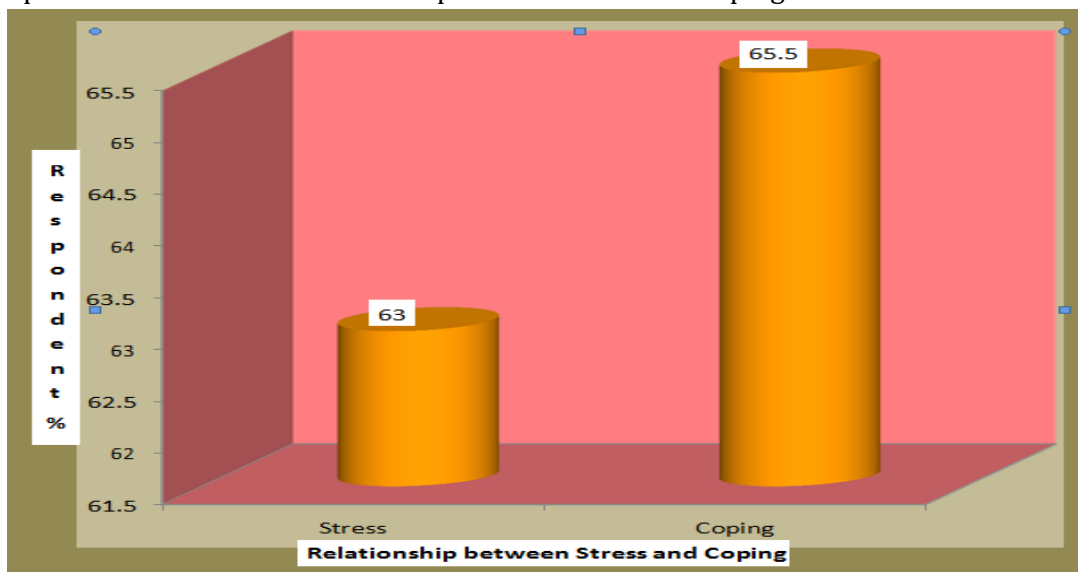


FIGURE 2: Cylindrical diagram representing correlation between stress and coping

Table 5: Association between Demographic variables and Stress level of Alcoholic Dependents (n=100)

Demo- graphic Variables	Category	Sample	Stress Level				χ^2 Value	P Value
			Low		Moderate			
			N	%	N	%		
Gender	Male	48	15	31.3	33	68.7	5.85*	P<0.05
	Female	52	6	11.5	46	88.5		
Religion	Hindu	20	5	25.0	15	75.0	3.40 NS	P>0.05
	Muslim	34	10	29.4	24	70.6		
	Christian	46	6	13.0	40	87.0		
Marital Status of parents	Living together	84	2	25.0	63	75.0	5.06*	P<0.05
	Living apart	16	0	0.0	16	100		

Educational Status	No formal Education	6	1	16.7	5	83.3	3.91 NS	P>0.05
	Secondary	18	4	22.2	14	77.8		
	Higher Secondary	5	14	27.5	37	72.5		
	Graduate	25	2	8.0	23	92.0		
Stay Present	Stay at Home	95	19	20.4	74	79.6	0.33 NS	P>0.05
	Hostel	3	1	33.3	2	66.7		
	Relatives	4	1	25.0	3	75.0		
Family Environment	Supportive ,Friendly	3	8	25.8	23	74.2	0.65 NS	P>0.05
	Non-supportive and Hostile	20	4	20.0	16	80.0		
	Adjustable	45	9	18.4	40	81.5		
Occupation - Family Head	Self employed	16	6	37.5	10	62.5	8.34*	P<0.05
	Private	33	10	30.3	23	69.7		
	Government	26	2	7.7	24	92.3		
	Daily wages	25	3	12.0	22	88.0		
Family Income/ month	Below Rs.10,000	55	6	10.9	49	89.1	7.91*	P<0.05
	Rs.10,001-20,000	37	13	35.1	24	64.9		
	Rs.20,001-30,000	8	2	25.0	6	75.0		
Duration of Alcoholism	1-2 years	53	9	17.0	44	83.0	3.99 NS	P>0.05
	3-5 years	2	3	14.3	18	85.7		
	6+ years	26	9	34.6	17	65.4		
Combined		100	21	21.0	79	79.0		

* Significant at 5% Level,

NS : Non-significant

INFERENCE

From the above results, it was evident that the selected socio demographic variable such as gender, marital status of parents, occupation of family head, family income shows the significant association with the perceived stress scores of COA.

TABLE – 6: Association between Demographic variables and Coping level on Alcoholic Dependents (n=100)

Demo- graphic Variables	Category	Sample	Coping Level				x2 value	P Value
			Low		Moderate			
			N	%	N	%		
1.Gender	Male	48	12	25.0	36	75.0	5.56*	P<0.05
	Female	52	4	7.7	48	92.3		
2.Religion	Hindu	20	5	25.0	15	75.0	3.56 NS	P>0.05
	Muslim	34	7	20.6	27	79.4		
	Christian	46	4	8.7	42	91.3		
3.Marital Status of Parents	Living together	84	13	15.5	71	84.5	0.11 NS	P>0.05
	No formal	6	1	16.7	5	83.3	4.61	P>0.05

4. Educational Status	Secondary	18	5	27.8	13	72.2	NS	
	Higher Secondary	51	9	17.7	42	82.3		
	Graduate	25	1	4.0	24	96.0		
5. Stay at Present	Stay at Home	93	14	15.1	79	84.9	6.55*	P<0.05
	Hostel	3	2	66.7	1	33.3		
	Relatives	4	0	0.0	4	100		
6. Family Environment	Supportive and Friendly	31	3	9.7	28	90.3	1.36 NS	P>0.05
	Non-supportive and Hostile	20	4	20.0	16	80.0		
	Adjustable	49	9	18.4	40	81.6		
7. Occupation of Family Head	Self employed	16	6	37.5	10	62.5	16.24 *	P<0.05
	Private	33	9	27.3	24	72.7		
	Government	26	1	3.9	25	96.1		
	Daily wages	25	0	0.0	25	100		
8. Family Income/month	Below Rs.10,000	55	6	10.9	49	89.1	6.00*	P<0.05
	Rs.10,001-20,000	37	10	27.0	27	73.0		
	Rs.20,001-30,000	8	0	0.0	8	100		
9. Duration of Alcoholism	1-2 years	53	5	9.4	48	90.6	9.06*	P>0.05
	3-5 years	21	2	9.5	19	90.5		
	6+ years	26	9	34.6	17	65.4		
Combined		100	16	16.0	84	84.0		

* Significant at 5% Level,

NS: Non-significant

Inference

It was evident that, the selected socio demographic variables such as gender, stay, occupation of head of family, family income, duration of alcoholism were associated with the coping scores of COA.

DISCUSSION

The study supported the findings of the study conducted by Stanley S and Vinutha C (2008) in which it was found that the children of alcoholic dependents experience increase levels of stress due to their parental alcoholism in their domestic environment. In the present study it was evidenced that majority 79 %, (79 out of 100) of the children of alcoholic dependents experience moderate stress, 21% (21 out of 100) of children of alcoholic dependents low stress and none of them experience high stress.⁴

It also supported the findings of another study conducted by Klostermann k, Chen R, Kelley ML, Schroeder VM, in which it was found that the children of alcoholic dependents were coping with parental alcoholic stress. It was also seen that they used coping strategies such as behavior disengagement, denial, focus on and venting of emotion, humor and substance abuse.⁵

In the present study it was evidenced that, majority 84%, (84 out of 100) of the children of alcoholic dependents experience moderate coping, 16% (16 out of 100) of the children of alcoholic dependents

experience low coping and none of the respondents experience high coping .A positive correlation ($r = +0.597$) was observed between perceived stress and coping strategies of children of alcoholic dependents. A significant association was found between gender, marital status of parents, occupation of family head family income and perceived stress. Significant associations were found between gender, stay at present, occupation of family head, family income, duration of alcoholism and coping strategies.

Limitations

- The study was conducted in a selected center. Hence generalization is possible only to the selected settings.
- The study has sampling constraints. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was used to select the samples; hence the generalizability of the inferential statistics correlation should be done with caution. Because in non-probability purposive sampling techniques the samples are not a true representation of the population.
- The study design used is a weak design.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study findings of the present study, the researcher had come to the conclusion that children of alcoholic dependents had moderate levels of stress and used moderate coping strategies in overcoming the stress. There was a positive correlation between the perceived stress and coping strategies among the children of alcoholic dependents.

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