



## PERCEIVED STRESS AND DEPRESSION IN COMPUTER PROFESSIONALS AND EFFECT OF RELAXATION TRAINING

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### ABSTRACT :

*In this modern era computer knowledge is part and parcel of humankind. Nowadays 90% of the working force uses computer while working in offices and homes. Computers have definitely given lot of benefits with which health hazards are also evident, not because of the machine but because of the user's lack of knowledge on handling stress issues. Many research studies support the ill effect of stress on physical health and psychological wellbeing. This study was initiated to analyse the prevalence of stress and depression, of computer professionals at Chidambaram town. Computer programmers, teachers, various computer assistants of Annamalai University participated in this study. The main objectives of the study was to assess the risk of stress for developing depression by Professional Life stress scale, Goldberg depression scale, to segregate vulnerable based on the assessment & teach relaxation training for them, Reassess with same scale on depression, and to compare the pre and post test results. The self screening questionnaire Professional life stress scale is distributed for assessment. The participants scoring 31 to 45 in this scale were assessed with Goldberg Depression scale. They were taught to practice relaxation training for a period of three months. The effect of relaxation was assessed, findings noted. With relaxation training stress tolerance was increasing for participants. Hence the effectiveness of relaxation practice was proved by Post test scores. The findings of the study concluded that much reduction in stress symptoms, depression rating with training of relaxation. With education about the way of handling stress by relaxation, many practitioners could apply at their work place.*

**KEYWORDS :** *Stress and Depression, Professional stress, and Relaxation training.*

### INTRODUCTION

Stress is defined as a non-specific response of the body to a stimulus or event (stressor). Under a general model of the stress response, when an individual experience a stressor, the stressor will lead to a physiological response, one that can be measured by several indicators, such as elevated heart rate. Stressors include extreme temperature time pressure, lack of sleep, and exposure to threat (Selye, 1956). Several authors hypothesize a negative linear relationship between stress and performance. At low levels of



stress, activation and alertness may be too low for effective performance. At high levels of stress, arousal is too high to be conducive to task performance. Though other professionals view working at computer as less energy consuming, seated at Air Conditioner room, any research studies with computer professionals reportedly showed higher levels of stress as pointed by (Hooda & Gurmeet, 2015). Reasons may vary, for stress, from long work hours, night shift, high work demand in less time

availability, task completion with competition, promotions and compensation package etc. apart from the personal issues. But the level of stress expressed did not vary with professionals. Since handling stress at professional life is the key for success and wellbeing, this study was aimed at teaching a relaxation program.

## METHODOLOGY

*Objectives:* The main objectives of the study are to study the risk of stress for developing depression by Professional Life stress scale, Goldberg depression scale, to segregate vulnerable based on the assessment & teach relaxation training for them, to reassess with same scale on depression, and to compare the pre and post test results. *Method:* For this study healthy individuals, working for a minimum of six months at computer, minimum for six hours a day, both male & female of age group 30-45 years are included. The assessment with professional life stress scale, showed various score ranges. Hundred participants were randomly selected scoring 31 to 45 in this scale. These participants were again assessed with Goldberg depression scale to know whether their stress might develop into depression. They occupied first and second level scoring. Instructions on the practice of relaxation at work place at regular time intervals, after obtaining proper permission from authorities were advised. In post therapy assessment done after three months, it was found that there existed tremendous reduction in stress. The improvement in Performance & the reduction in stress for participants were represented graphically. *Method of Data collection:* Self-administered questionnaire of Professional life Stress Scale (Fontana, 1989) is a 22 question list tool with options for representing the answers. Based on the response, participants were categorised on different levels of stress using the following key. Score = 0-15, Low Stress; Stress isn't a problem in your life. Score = 16-30, Moderate range of stress for a busy professional person. It's nevertheless well worth looking at how it can reasonably be reduced. Score = 31-45, High Stress is clearly a problem, and the need for remedial action. Score = 45-60, Very high stress is a major problem, and something must be done without delay. It was seen that there were more respondents at third level of this scale, compared to first two levels. For a review about depression, Goldberg Depression scale was used. By the questionnaire, sadness and lack of interest in life, disappointment, inability in decision making could be analysed with the interpretations made at questionnaire.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

With relaxation training stress tolerance was increasing for participants. Hence the effectiveness of relaxation practice was proved by Post test scores.

PLSS revealed 17 participants in 0-15 score, 24 participants in 16-30 score, 59 participants in 31-45 score, no participants in 46-60 score. When the 59 participants were retested in GDS, 12 males took 0-9 score, 19 males and 28 females took 10-17 score. Females were more stressed before learning relaxation. After relaxation, 24 Males, 16 Females with came to 0-9 score level, 07 Males, 12 Females scored 10-17. This gradual step up could be easily understood as the effect of relaxation training.

The professional life stress could vary from company to company, depending upon their respective service rules; working environment was given in a study by (Johnson JV, Lipscomb J. 2006). Previously published articles on Indian software professional suggested that over 50% were professionally stressed (Darshan et al., 2013). They also argued that this led to alcoholism and loss of performance. Though the study is done in and around Chidambaram town it reveals important information on the effectiveness of practicing yogic relaxation technique. The technique carries the advantage of easy learning, less time consumption in practice, doesn't need sophisticated basic requirements to practice and follow. Effect is proved in objective term of assessment.

## CONCLUSION

The study was aimed at reducing stress and depression of computer professionals. It was felt essential to reduce stress factor for them to increase performance. The yogic relaxation therapy was taught to those

who needed remedial action for managing stress. Findings revealed that constant practice of yoga makes tremendous benefits.

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