

**Psychological distress associated factors and coping strategies among female student nurses in the nursing training school Galle**

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A cross-sectional descriptive study was carried out among female student nurses in the NTS Galle. All 525 female student nurses were included to the study on the advice of the ethical committee and since it was feasible to collect information although the calculated sample size was 422. The female student nurses belonged to 3rd year (2007 batch) and 2nd year (2006 batch). A self administered questionnaire (S Q) collected demographic, socio-economic characteristics, work and non-work related factors. Assessment of status of psychological distress was done using the already validated, General Health Questionnaire-30 (GHQ-30) Sinhala version. A third SAQ gathered information on problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies for stress. Data was analyzed using SPSS package and appropriate statistical tests were applied. The study found that 46.6 percent female student nurses were psychologically distressed. Among non-work related factors, an illness or a major injury of female student nurses and illness or a major injury of female student nurses and illness/major injury or death of a family member or a close person, increasing arguments with family members, missing opportunities to meet beloved ones and financial problems during the past four weeks were significantly associated with psychological distress ( $p < 0.05$ ) more than 40 percent of student nurses practiced each of problem-focused coping strategy seldom. Majority of the female student nurses were frequently practicing the comfort in religion or spiritual beliefs while harmful coping strategies were practiced by a lower proportion of them.