ABSTRACT

Background: Physiotherapy students endure rigorous academic and clinical demands, often leading to elevated stress, which may impact cognitive functions. This study aimed to investigate the effect of Perceived stress on working memory among final-year physiotherapy students.

Methodology: An observational cross-sectional study was conducted with 56 final-year physiotherapy students from Brainware University. Stress levels were quantified using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10), while working memory capacity was evaluated using the Digit Span Test (Forward and Backward).

Results: The majority of the participants (87.50%) experienced moderate levels of perceived stress. Statistical analysis revealed no significant correlation between perceived stress and working memory performance ($r = 0.042$, $p = 0.757$). Furthermore, there was no statistically significant difference in memory scores across low, moderate, and high-stress categories ($p = 0.768$).

Conclusion: The findings indicate that perceived stress does not significantly impair the working memory of final-year physiotherapy students. Despite prevailing academic and clinical stressors, participants maintained stable cognitive performance, highlighting their psychological resilience, effective task habituation, and the potential facilitative role of eustress.

Keywords: Perceived Stress, Working Memory, Physiotherapy Students, Cognitive Resilience, Digit Span Test.

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