

Examining The Factors Affecting Stress and Its Impact On Performance of Medical Representatives During The Era of Coronavirus (COVID-19) –Pandemic Outbreak.

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ABSTRACT:-The purpose of this study is to identify the factors influencing job stress and its impact on performance of Medical Representatives working under pharmaceutical industry,during this COVID-19 outbreak.We all know that increased stress leads to reduced productivity and also overall affects the overall performance.Stress is a universal and common challenge to employee productivity,it is the reality of modern day workplace.

Keywords:-Pharmaceutical industry,Medical Representative,Job stress,performance

I. INTRODUCTION

Medical Representatives plays a critical role in pharmaceutical industry and they are mainly responsible for sales and giving information on medical products to doctors and pharmacists.Medical Representatives are facing high level of stress due to various factors such as heavy workload,tight deadline,mobility nature of work,unattainable targets,long working hours,work pressure etc.Sales Representatives are critically important to a pharmaceutical company as the company's image and revenue are highly dependent on their ability to satisfy all customer needs.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Shahu and Gole (2008) study drew attention on occupational stress which they said is commonly acknowledged to be a critical issue for managers of private manufacturing companies. Their study examined the relationship between job stress, job satisfaction and performance among 100 managers of private manufacturing firms. The findings of the study suggest that higher stress levels are related to lower performance whereas higher job satisfaction indicates higher performance.

Aziz (2004) opined that organizational stress originates in organizational demands that are experienced by the individual. Stress is built up in the concept of role which is conceived as the position a person occupies in a system. The paper investigated the intensity of organizational role stress among women information technology professionals in the Indian private sector. Organizational role stress scale was used on a sample of 264 professionals to explore the level of role stress. Resource inadequacy emerged to be the most potent role stressor, followed by role overload and personal in adequacy. The research found differences in the level of stress between married and unmarried employees on several role stressors. However, level of education did not emerge as a significant differentiator of stressors

Kapil et al (2003) conducted a study to determine those critical success factors that are specific to small scale pharmaceutical companies. Data were collected by mailed questionnaires to small scale pharma companies. Factor analysis of 33 variables identified 11 main factors, among which marketing was identified as most important factor by CEO's of small scale companies followed by entrepreneur's attributes and abilities, governmental policies, technological competence, clusters, networking, R&D infrastructure, company's climate and raw material supplies. The researchers suggested that small firm's should form alliances with larger pharmaceutical companies, but as they mature and grow their product portfolio, their own sales channels should be re-evaluated.

Uday Raj Sharma and Divakar Goli (2012) in their book, 'Pharmaceutical Marketing Management' have stated the unique aspects of marketing prescription medicines. These are: • Influence of non-buyers i.e. Doctors, on the buying habits of consumers. • Authorization powers of physicians- consumers need a prescription to purchase prescription medicines. • Professional

licensing required for stocking and selling pharma products. • Records of every transaction are kept that are specific to Patients, Physician, and Product.

Roy Joseph & Bhavana Chaudhari (2011) in their book, ‘The Sales Capsule’ mentioned that advertisement & sales promotion are basically the two important features used to promote the sales of pharmaceutical products. For prescription based medicines the advertisement is done by the pharma companies at Doctors level only and the sales promotion is done at chemists and stockists’ levels.

Abhay Bora & Nilesh Berad (2013) in their research paper on “Marketing prescription-based medicines: Salesperson’s Feedbacks” in International Journal on Concept Management mentioned that MR’s & Managers plays a very crucial role in marketing prescription-based medicines by executing the innovative strategies designed by the pharma companies. They further added that pharma companies are employing large variety of promotional means for Doctors ranging from prescription pads, pens, books & journals to high value gifts like music systems, mobiles, cameras as well as sponsorships for conferences and family tours, etc. Among all these, regular MR visits, MR rapport with Doctors, high value gifts and sponsorships are found to be most effective tools for effective marketing of prescription-based medicines.

Objectives of The Study

- *To analyse the relation between stress and performance of medical representatives.
- *To analyse the variables which influences the performance of Medical Representatives.
- *To suggest suitable measures to overcome stress and to enhance performance of medical representatives.

Research Design

Research design used is Descriptive design and Research approach is qualitative in nature. Sample population is taken as Medical Representatives. Sample Design is south zone of three districts ie, Palakkad, Malappuram and Thrissur. The secondary data is collected through various journals, publication of research agencies, magazines, newspaper, internet and libraries.

How COVID -19 crisis impacting Medical Representatives

Today, due to COVID-19 pandemic, health care providers including hospitals, clinics are refusing in -person visits of MR. Now world is

facing an unprecedented health crisis, one group shouldering the brunt of the challenges is our healthcare workers, who are battling the threat from the front lines.

Virtual tools or platforms:- Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, virtual tools are being increasingly utilised by pharmaceutical companies to replace in-person meetings. Virtual platforms will create a transformational impact on pharmaceutical industry. The shift from in-person to digital is seen in advertising, medical conferences and also meetings with physicians.

Lack of interaction:- In -person meetings have their own advantages such as medical representatives being able to express themselves by using body language and facial expressions or gestures that can better convey a message and create a deeper bond with a customer. The lack of a physical component in human interaction may lead to a weaker influence of representative over respective physicians and therefore reduce drug sales. It will increase the stress of medical representative and thereby affects the performance too.

Training of representatives:- Medical Representatives need to utilize the time saved on travel to draft strategies for more engaging interactions. They also need to be trained on using specific technology tools for better results.

Managing productivity :- Due to this COVID-19 crisis, Medical Representatives are forced to work from home. So the companies should explore work from home model atleast for extended future or probably permanently.

Diagrams showing the relationship between Stress and Performance

DIAGRAM:-1

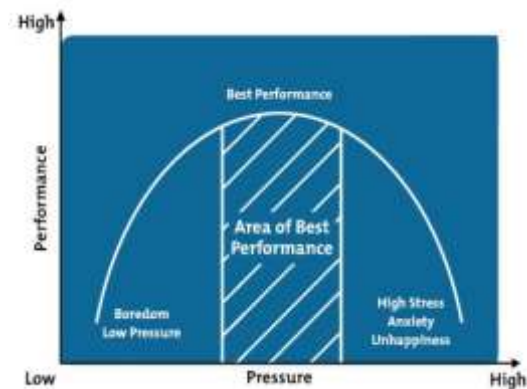


DIAGRAM: -2
 STRESS LEVEL



Relationship between Stress and Performance: -It can be said that performance is affected by stress level and type. This relation can be explained through decrease and increase in work load. When the stress level is low, the worker's performance is sustained. When the worker is not exposed to stress while performing his/her duties, the performance is actually improved. In fact the low stress stimulates workers and provide them with the incentive for better performance. The stress can be responsible for initiative, creativity and invention. On the other hand when stress level is high, negative effects will appear such as fatigue, dissatisfaction, absence and even quitting. Hostile behavior will also appear such as vandalism and sabotage. Therefore, performance and achievement is inversely proportional to stress. The stress level should be at some degree to provide positive stimulations.

III. DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTION

The present study were dealing with the relationship of stress and performance. Medical Representatives are facing various job related issues and their job is interfering their personal life and they are facing continuous pressure for improved performance. So physicians should show flexibility and empathy towards Medical Representatives. When work begins to overlap with worker's personal life this implies a negative effect on productivity. Stress is a universal and common challenge to employees productivity, it is the reality of modern day workplace. Employees working in different sectors have to deal with stress. High stress contributes to decreased organisational performance, decreased employee overall performance, poor quality of work, absenteeism etc. And finally it will leads to health problems such as anxiety, emotional disorder, depression, work life imbalances and other forms of ailments such as frequent headaches, cardiac arrests, obesity etc.

IV. CONCLUSION

Mainly pharmaceutical industry needs to understand the exact factors related to work stress, and to focus the relationship between stress, job satisfaction and performance of medical representatives. Job stress is unavoidable and it directly affects the quality and efficiency of employees. Managing stress will also improve the quality of life and to reduce the risk of illness. No doubt, it will generate healthy working conditions also. While healthcare workers are bound to be overburdened, and under tremendous stress in these times, this is also a tough time for pharmaceutical company representatives too. Shifting from in-person to virtual platforms definitely represents a drastic change in pharmaceutical industry.

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