

Role of Alexithymia in Occupational Stress and Burnout

Santosh Kumar Singh* and Anand kumar**

Abstract

This study examined the role of alexithymia in predicting occupational stress and burnout. The moderating role of alexithymia in occupational stress burnout relationship was also examined. A relatively heterogeneous sample of 120 doctors belonging to different fields of medical specialties in the age range of 35-55 years was examined on the self report measures of Hindi version of Twenty- item Tornto Alexithymia scale, Medical professionals Work related stress inventory and Maslach Burnout inventory Hindi version. The finding revealed that alexithymia and its various dimension in general, are associated with higher level of occupational stress and burnout. However among the three dimensions of Alexithymia examined in the present study the difficulty in Identifying feeling was found the best predictor of occupational stress and its various dimension on the other hand difficulty in describing emerged as a best predictor of burnout and its various dimension finding also revealed that one dimension of alexithymia particularly difficulty in describing feeling significantly moderate the relationship of occupational stress and burnout. Overall the finding suggest that a doctors having more difficulty in Identifying feeling is likely to experiences higher level of occupational stress particularly related with incompatible working ambience, work overload and difficulty in caring the problematic patient the tendency for externally oriented thinking is responsible for higher level of occupational stress related with external interferences in the practice of medical profession on the other hand a doctors who are at difficulty in describing feeling are at risk to develop feeling of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and low personal accomplishment. The finding also revealed that difficulty in describing feeling is a negative moderator of occupational stress burnout relationship; this dimension of alexithymia operates as a risk factor for the development of burnout (particularly emotional exhaustion) in face of high occupational stress. The obtained findings have been discussed in the light of available empirical evidence.

Key Words: Alexithymia, Occupational Stress and Burnout

* Post Doctoral Fellow, Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith, Varanasi

** Professor and Head, Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith, Varanasi