

An Empirical Study of Stress Level and Psychosomatic Complaints of Field Sales People in Pharmaceutical Sector

CS Ankit Shah

Assistant Professor, School of Liberal Arts and Management Studies, P P Savani University, NH 8, GETCO, Near Biltech, Dhamdod, Kosamba - 394125, Surat, Gujarat

Dr. Ronak Mehta

Assistant Professor, School of Liberal Arts and Management Studies, P P Savani University, NH 8, GETCO, Near Biltech, Dhamdod, Kosamba - 394125, Surat, Gujarat

Dr. Jainish Bhagat

Associate Professor, School of Liberal Arts and Management Studies, P P Savani University, NH 8, GETCO, Near Biltech, Dhamdod, Kosamba - 394125, Surat, Gujarat

ABSTRACT

The sales field in the area of the pharmaceutical industry is one of the challenging and high-pressure fields in which the performance to achieve target matters and persistent efforts are given. The salespeople (Medical representatives) often find illness and they think it is a physical illness but in reality, it is caused by the mental stress arising from the fieldwork and stress of the sales target. In this research, we are going to find causes of mental stress, different physical illnesses arising due to higher stress tolerance (psychosomatic complaints), and the remedies to overcome psychosomatic complaints in the field of the pharmaceutical industry. Psychosomatic disorders are frequently misunderstood. The term is used when a psychiatric problem, such as depression, anxiety, or another disturbance, obvious itself as seemingly unrelated physical symptoms. So far no study has been conducted in India as far as psychosomatic complaints are concerns of sales field people in the pharmaceutical industry.

Keywords: Psychosomatic, Psychological Complaints, Psychosomatic Disorder, Stress Management, Work Life Balance.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

A past study shows that field Sales People especially in the pharmaceutical Sector are facing the highest level of Stress. These stimulate us to study Psychosomatic Complaints faced by field Sales People as a result of Stress in the Workplace.

INTRODUCTION:

PSYCHOSOMATIC COMPLAINTS:

Definition:

- When a condition is psychosomatic, that means that it involves both the mind and body. A psychosomatic illness originates with emotional stress or damaging thought patterns and progresses with physical symptoms usually when a person's immune system is compromised due to someone's mind.

What is psychosomatic illness?

- Psychosomatic is defined as concerning or involving both mind and body. Psychosomatic illnesses can be classified into three general types. The first type includes people who have both a mental (psychiatric) illness and a medical illness, and these illnesses complicate the symptoms and management of each other. The second type includes people who have a psychiatric problem that is a direct result of a medical disease or its treatment, such as having depression due to cancer and its treatment.

- To make a diagnosis of a psychosomatic disorder, there must be no other medical explanation for the symptoms. This is not unusual. In fact, one survey has suggested that as many as 5% of complaints in the primary care setting are those that can't be explained by a known medical condition, toxin, or medication. While not all of these cases are psychosomatic, it is certainly not uncommon for problems with stress, mood, or other psychiatric disturbances to appear in seemingly unusual ways.

What causes psychosomatic illness?

- The exact cause of somatoform disorders, which are the major type of psychosomatic illness, is not known.
- Somatoform disorders tend to run in families and may have a genetic component. Somatoform disorders may be a coping strategy, a learned behavior, or the result of a personality characteristic.
- They may also be linked to problems with nerve impulses that carry false signals to the brain. While the cause of somatoform disorders is not known, the symptoms are real to the person experiencing them.
- Triggers of somatoform disorders may include strong emotional or psychological experiences, such as:
 - 1) Abuse
 - 2) Anger
 - 3) Anxiety
 - 4) Depression
 - 5) Grief
 - 6) Guilt
 - 7) Stress
 - 8) Trauma

What is stress?

Stress seems to be everywhere: in personal lives and on the job. Stress is an interaction between an individual and the environment characterized by emotions affecting a person's physical and mental condition. Stress may be defined as a pattern of emotional and physiological reactions in response to demands from internal and external sources.

Causes of Stress:

- Many managers who attend management courses regularly inquire about the impact of stress factors on their sales force.
- Salespeople face numerous stress factors in their daily lives such as running into traffic, visiting difficult clients, and often spending days away from their families.
- If there is tension between the salesperson and sales manager, there is a reduction in performance.
- Nowadays scientists study field sales people identify possible stress factors and research their significance for workers.
- The stress factor was divided into two categories:
 1. Stress factors that are determined by situations in daily work
 2. Stress factor which results from the structures and conditions in business.
- There are some important stress factors:
 1. A lack of flexibility in a company there are some of the companies that officially follow the rules and regulations. The more flexible they are in their interpretation the better the salesperson feels.
- Short-term 'acute' stress is the reaction to the immediate threat, also known as the fight or flight response.
- This is when the primitive part of the brain and certain chemicals within the brain cause a reaction to potentially harmful stressors or warnings such as noise, overcrowding, danger, harassment, or even an imagined or recalled threat.
- When the threat subsides the body returns to normal, which is called the 'relaxation response'.
- **Long term:**
 1. Long-term 'chronic' stressors are those pressures that are ongoing and continuous when the urge to fight or flight has been suppressed.

Sign of stress – stress test:

1. Sleep difficulties
2. Loss of appetite
3. Poor concentration or poor memory retention
4. Performance dip
5. Uncharacteristic errors or missed deadlines
6. Anger or irritability
7. Violent or anti-social behavior
8. Emotional explosion
9. Alcohol or drug abuse
10. Nervous habits

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

- **Objectives:**
 - **Primary Objective(s)**
 - To identify the most dominant Stress factors for Psychosomatic Complaints among Field Sales People.
 - To identify/detect the moderating effects between working hours and Work Stress to associate it with Psychosomatic Complaints.
 - To associate the performance of Field salespeople with Psychosomatic Complaints generated by Work Stress.
 - To recognize and explore the significance level between the degree of Stress and Psychosomatic Complaints confronted by field Sales People in the pharmaceutical Sector.
- **Research Design:**

Descriptive research design

- **Source of Data Collection:**
 1. primary data has been collected through a structured questionnaire.
 2. Secondary data has been collected through the website, internet, and company premises.
- **Data collection method:**

In this study, data has been collected by survey method by using a questionnaire.
- **Research instrument:**

Structured questionnaire
- **Sampling Design:**

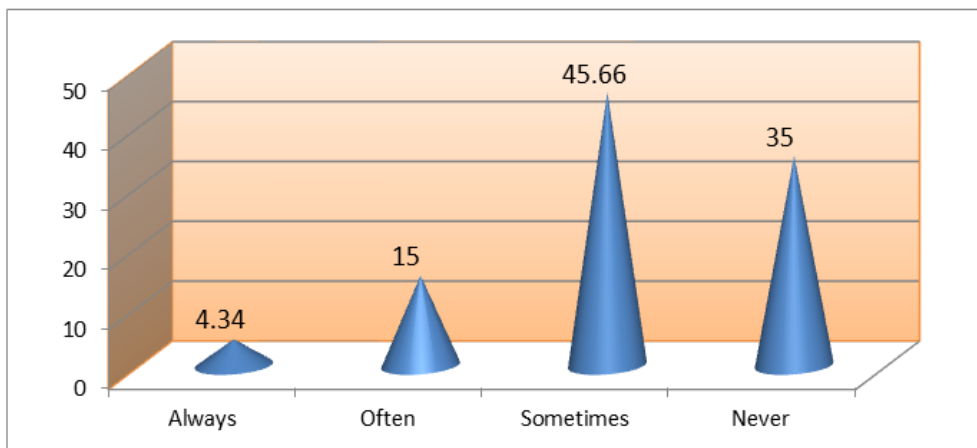
Non-probability Convenience sampling
- **Sample Size:**

300 samples were selected from Bharuch District.

QUE 1:- Since last six months how many times have you suffered from poor health?

Objective: the objective of the question is to test how many times salespeople suffer from the salespeople.

Option	Respondents
Always	13
Often	45
Sometimes	137
Never	105



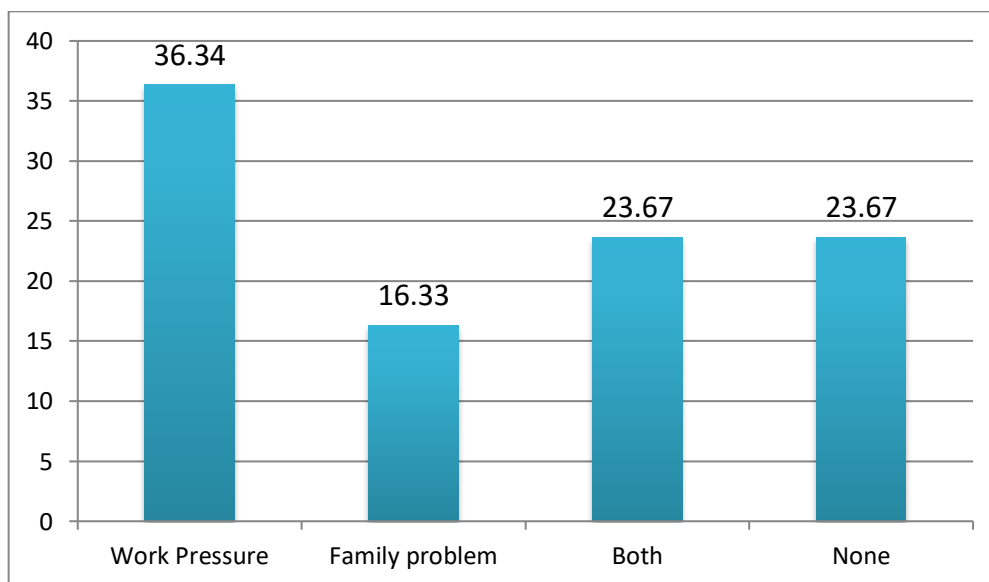
INTERPRETATION:

As per the above graphs, 137 respondents view that they sometimes suffer from poor health. It means that sometimes salespeople's work and personal lives are disrupted. It means sometimes salespeople cannot concentrate on their work. 35% of respondents said that they had never suffered from poor health within six months. It means they enjoy their job life and personal life in a good way without decreased efficiency in the work.

QUE 2:- According to you what is the main reason for your poor health?

Objective: the objective of the question is to test what is the reason for the poor health of the salespeople.

Option	Respondents
Work Pressure	109
Family problem	49
Both	71
None	71



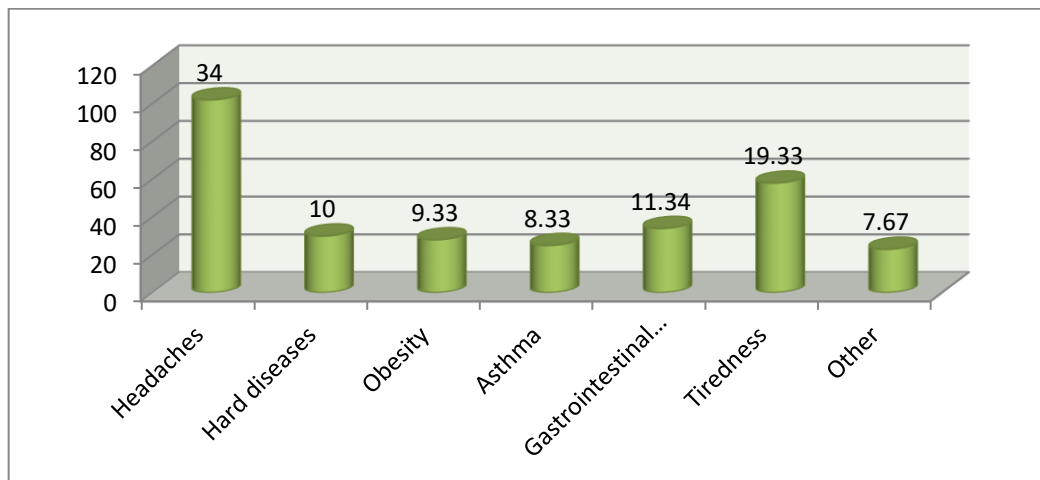
INTERPRETATION:

Based on the above charts we show that the major salespeople have poor health due to the work pressure in comparison to the family problem. It means maybe the possibility of the concentration and work efficiency of the salespeople decreased. However, 24% of respondents said that they have none of the reasons for their poor health. It means they are not suffering from poor health within six months.

QUE 3:- Which types of physical symptoms affected your health?

Objective: The objective of the question is to know which types of physical symptoms affect the health of the salespeople.

Option	Respondents
Headaches	102
Heart diseases	30
Obesity	28
Asthma	25
Gastrointestinal Problem	34
Tiredness	58
Other	23



INTERPRETATION:

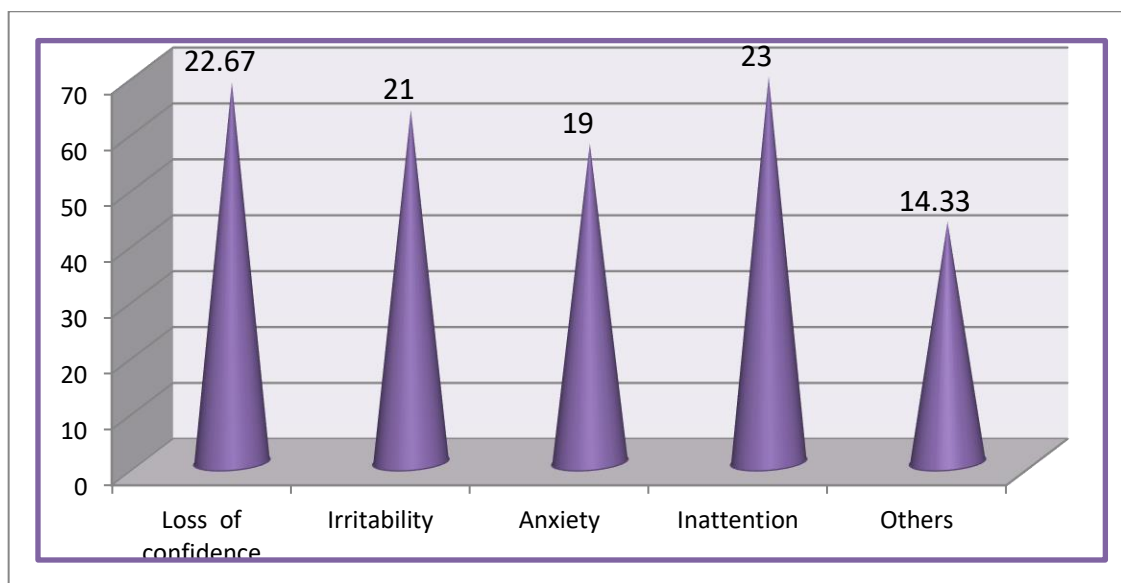
Based on the above graphs we show that 34% sales people view that they suffer from headaches. Which is the highest reason for the physical problems? But the salespeople also suffer from other problems like eye problems, fever, fatigue, and body pain. But the 58 salespeople said that they were suffering from tiredness. The reason for the tiredness may be the overload of the work.

QUE 4:- Which type of neurological symptoms affected your health?

Objective: The objective of the question is to test which types of neurological problems affect the health of salespeople.

Option	Respondents
Loss of confidence	68
Irritability	63

Anxiety	57
Inattention	69
Others	43



INTERPRETATION:

Based on the above charts we concluded that 46% of salespeople suffer from neurological problems of the loss of confidence and inattention. Due to the two major reasons the possibility of the sales people are in under the depression. The possibility of work efficiency is decreased and as well as they never concentrate on their personal life. And salespeople also suffer from other neurological problems like loss of memory, and tension.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

CHART 1:- WORKING HOURS AND PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS.

Ho: Working hours are not independent of physical symptoms that affect salespeople's health.

H1: Working hours are independent of physical symptoms affected to

Salespeople's health.

Physical symptoms. → Working hours. ↓	Headaches	Heart diseases	Obesity	Asthma	Gastrointestinal	Tiredness	others	Total
3-5 hrs	13(12.92)	7(3.54)	5(3.54)	4(3.16)	2(4.30)	7(7.34)	(2.91)	38
5-7 hrs	23(26.18)	8(7.7)	7(7.18)	7(6.42)	14(8.72)	15(14.88)	3(5.90)	77
Above 7 hrs	66(62.9)	15(18.5)	16(17.26)	16(15.42)	18(20.96)	36(35.76)	20(14.18)	185
Total	102	30	28	25	34	58	23	300

Fo	Fe	fo-fe	(fo-fe) ²
13	12.92	0.08	0.0064
7	3.8	3.2	10.24
5	3.54	1.46	2.1316
4	3.16	0.84	0.7056
2	4.3	-2.3	5.29
7	7.34	-0.34	0.1156
0	2.91	-2.91	8.4681
23	26.18	-3.18	10.1124
8	7.7	0.3	0.09
7	7.18	-0.18	0.0324
7	6.42	0.58	0.3364
14	8.72	5.28	27.8784
15	14.88	0.12	0.0144
3	5.9	-2.9	8.41
66	62.9	3.1	9.61
15	18.5	-3.5	12.25
16	17.26	-1.26	1.5876
14	15.42	-1.42	2.0164
18	20.96	-2.96	8.7616
36	35.76	0.24	0.0576
20	14.18	5.82	33.8724
Total	299.93	0.07	141.9869

Calculation:

Formula

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(fo-fe)^2}{fe}$$

$$= \frac{141.9869}{299.93}$$

$$= 0.4734$$

For χ^2 tabulated

D.of = (r-1)(c-1) = (3-1)(7-1) = 12

Significance Level = 5% = 0.05

So $\chi^2_T = 21.0261$.

Here, $\chi^2_c < \chi^2_t$

Hence, H_0 accepted that means working hours is not independent from physical symptoms affected to sales people health.

Interpretation:

Based on the statistical test (chi-square) H_0 accepted that working hours are not independent of physical symptoms affected to salespeople's health. It indicates that when salespeople work more than their usual working hours it may be the impact of the physical health of the salespeople.

CHART 2:- WORKING HOURS AND NEUROLOGICAL SYMPTOMS.

Ho: Working hours are not independent of neurological symptoms affecting Sales people health.

H1: Working hours are independent of neurological symptoms affecting Sales people health.

Neurological symptoms. → Working hours. ↓	Loss of self confidence	Irritability	Anxiety	Inattention	others	Total
3-5 hrs	6(8.84)	8(8.19)	7(7.41)	14(8.97)	4(5.59)	39
5-7 hrs	16(16.77)	22(15.54)	20(14.06)	9(17.02)	7(10.60)	74
Above 7 hrs	46(42.38)	33(39.27)	30(35.53)	46(43.01)	32(26.80)	187
Total	68	63	57	69	43	300

Fo	Fe	fo-fe	(fo-fe) ²
6	8.84	-2.84	8.0656
8	8.19	-0.19	0.0361
7	7.41	-0.41	0.1681
14	8.97	5.03	25.3009
4	5.59	-1.59	2.5281
16	16.77	-0.77	0.5929
22	15.54	6.46	41.7316
20	14.06	5.94	35.2836
9	17.02	-8.02	64.3204
7	10.6	-3.6	12.96
33	42.38	-9.38	87.9844
22	39.27	-17.27	298.2529
30	35.53	-5.53	30.5809
46	43.01	2.99	8.9401
32	26.8	5.2	27.04
Total	299.98	-23.98	643.7856

Calculation:

Formula

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(fo-fe)^2}{fe}$$

$$= \frac{643.7856}{299.98}$$

$$= 2.15$$

For χ^2_T

D.of = (r-1)(c-1) = (3-1)(5-1) = 8

Significance Level = 5% = 0.05

So $\chi^2_T = 15.5073$

Here, $\chi^2_c < \chi^2_t$

Hence, H_0 accepted that means working hours is not independent from neurological symptoms affected to sales people health.

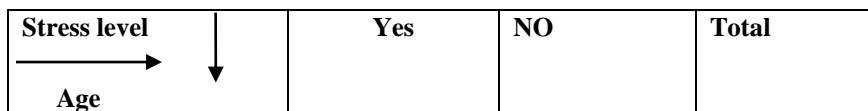
Interpretation:

Based on the statistical test (chi-square) **H_0** accepted that working hours are independent of neurological symptoms that affect salespeople's health. That means increased working hours will also increase the neurological disease of the salespeople. It means if the salespeople work more than the working hours it will create mind-related problems for a long time.

CHART 3:- AGE AND STRESS

H_0 : there is age and stresses are independent variables.

H_1 : There is age and stress is not an independent variable.



0-25 yrs	24(23.4)	28(28.6)	52
25-50 yrs	97(97.65)	120(119.35)	217
50-75 yrs	14(13.95)	17(17.05)	31
Total	135	165	300

Fo	Fe	fo-fe	(fo-fe) ²
24	23.44	0.56	0.3136
28	28.6	-0.6	0.36
7	97.65	-0.65	0.4225
120	119.35	0.65	0.4225
14	13.95	0.05	0.0025
17	17.05	-0.05	0.0025
Total	300.04	-0.04	1.5236

Calculation:

Formula

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(fo-fe)^2}{fe}$$

$$= \frac{1.5236}{300.04}$$

$$= 0.005078.$$

For χ^2_{2T}

D.of = (r-1)(c-1) = (3-1)(2-1) = 2

Significance Level = 5% = 0.05

So $\chi^2_T = 5.9915$

Here, $\chi^2_c < \chi^2_t$

Hence, H_0 accepted that means there is an age and stress are independent variable

Interpretation:

Based on the statistical test (chi-square) H_0 accepted that means there is age and stress are independent variables. It means that age and stress do have not a direct relationship. That means increasing the age is not the reason for the stress. The reasons for the stress are personal or Job-related.

CHART 4:- CRITICAL SITUATION AND SOCIAL LIFE.

H_0 : There is a critical situation and social life is the independent variable

H_1 : There is a critical situation and social life is not an independent variable

Social life → Critical situation ↓	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	Total
Always	6(4.9)	5(4.78)	18(16.1)	1(9.21)	35

Often	8(6.72)	16(6.56)	21(22.08)	3(12.64)	48
Sometimes	14(20.02)	16(19.54)	80(65.78)	33(37.65)	143
Never	9(10.36)	4(10.12)	19(34.04)	42(19.48)	74
Total	42	41	138	79	300

Fo	Fe	fo-fe	(fo-fe) ²
11	4.9	6.1	37.21
5	4.78	0.22	0.0484
18	16.1	1.9	3.61
1	9.21	-8.21	67.4041
8	6.72	1.28	1.6384
16	6.56	9.44	89.1136
21	22.08	-1.08	1.1664
3	12.64	-9.64	92.9296
7	20.02	-13.02	169.5204
9	19.54	-10.54	111.0916
80	65.78	14.22	202.2084
33	37.65	-4.65	21.6225
9	10.36	-1.36	1.8496
4	10.12	-6.12	37.4544
19	34.04	-15.04	226.2016
42	19.48	22.52	507.1504
Total	299.98	-13.98	1570.219

Calculation:**Formula**

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(fo-fe)^2}{fe}$$

$$= \frac{1570.219}{299.98}$$

$$= 5.2344.$$

For χ^2_T

$$D.of = (r-1)(c-1) = (4-1)(4-1) = 9$$

Significance Level = 5% = 0.05

So $\chi^2_T = 16.9190$

Here, $\chi^2_c < \chi^2_t$

Hence, H_0 accepted that means There is a critical situation and social life are independent variable

Interpretation:

Based on the statistical test (chi-square) H_0 accepted that means there is a critical situation and social life is an independent variable. It means vital situations do affect the social life of salespeople. And in the long run, it may be the effect on the personal life.

Findings from the Research:

Based on the comprehensive Report we found that

- Salespeople suffer from various psychosomatic complaints.
- People are not aware of their psychosomatic complaints.
- A strong relation was found between the physical and neurological symptoms and the duration of work.
- Work efficiency decreases with the increased amount of stress.
- The main reason for psychosomatic complaints is their working life.
- Salespeople are not able to balance their working life and social life.
- Salespeople have too much work burden.
- Unable to handle the critical situation.

Conclusion:

According to the research, it was found that salespeople in the pharmaceutical sector are suffering from some types of physical and neurological symptoms. It shows psychosomatic complaints in salespeople.

The main reasons for the psychosomatic complaints are stress, high working hours, and imbalance between work and personal life.

Based on the research report we concluded that the pharmaceutical company work environment is motivating in financial terms but if the companies allow salespeople to do work with limited job hours, in that case, the efficiency of the sales people work is increased as well as they maintain their working life and social life also.

Due to the high stress level and the working hours, the growth of the pharmaceutical companies is decreased and it leads to the high employee turnover ratio.

Recommendations:

The company should consider following suggestions to decrease psychosomatic complaints for their employees.

- The company should provide meditation Techniques the decrease the stress level.
- The company should organize informal functions to maintain social relations.
- The pharmaceutical company should fix the working hours.

References

1. Donald R. Brown Don Harvey, "Change Management And Organize Development." 11th Edition, Pearson.
2. http://www.humannatureatwork.com/articles/workplace_stress/Workplace_Stress_Managing_Stress.html
3. Levenson, James L. (2006). *Essentials of Psychosomatic Medicine*. American Psychiatric Press Inc. ISBN 978-1-58562-246-7.
4. Nurdeen Deuraseh and Mansor Abu Talib (2005), "Mental health in Islamic medical tradition", *The International Medical Journal* 4 (2), p. 76-79.
5. Asaad, Ghazi (1996). *Psychosomatic Disorders: Theoretical and Clinical Aspects*. Brunner-Mazel. pp. X, 129–130. ISBN 978-0-87630-803-5.
6. Erwin, Edward (2002). *The Freud Encyclopedia: Theory, Therapy and Culture*. Routledge. pp. 245–246. ISBN 978-0-415-93677-4.
7. Sarno, John (2006). *The Divided Mind*. ReganBooks. ISBN 0-06-085178-3.
8. "GI Consult: Perforated Peptic Ulcer". Retrieved 2007-08-26.
9. Melmed, Raphael N. (2001). *Mind, Body, and Medicine: An Integrative Text*. Oxford University Press Inc, USA. pp. 191–192. ISBN 978-0-19-513164-2.
10. <https://www.healthgrades.com/right-care/mental-health-and-behavior/psychosomatic-illness/>