

Health Perception Among Medical and Engineering Professionals: An Attempt to Investigate Meaning of Being Healthy

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To bring out prevailing perception on health among the medical and engineering professionals.
Methods: A cross-sectional study was carried out among 295 professionals (122 doctors and 173 engineers) administering a pre tested semi-structured questionnaire.

Results: Analysis of the 295 respondent's perception on health reveals that health means to them more of emotional and spiritual aspects of health followed by nutritional, vocational, and environmental aspect of health. The medical professional believes more on the job stress and lifestyle dimensions in contrast to the engineering professionals. The engineering professional believes more on the environmental dimension and vocational dimension (having a job) whereas not so in the medical professionals.

Conclusion: There is no much conceptual contrast in health perceptions between medical and engineering professionals both groups gave more importance to emotional and spiritual dimensions.

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Traditionally, health is viewed as an absence of disease and if one is free from disease the person is considered healthy. This concept called the biomedical concept of health dominated medical thoughts throughout the turn of 20th century (1). The WHO (1948) defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity (2). Eventually, health is multidimensional and not confined to physical health. Lately, spiritual component has also been added. The question arises do the people recognise all the dimensions of health equally or they give priority to one or the other dimension? It is essential to know the felt need of the people so that the strategies of health promotion can be tailored accordingly. At the same time, if there is a gross inadequacy or misinterpretation in perception of health awareness has to be generated. In a world of continuous change, new concepts are bound to emerge based on the changing socio-cultural values and the new pattern of thought. We, as health promoters, explore and define for ourselves what being healthy means to us and may mean to our community. This study aims to bring out prevailing perception on health among the medical and engineering professionals.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among the professionals in two randomly selected medical and engineering colleges in Chennai by administering a pre tested semi-structured questionnaire. Two hundred and ninety-five teaching staffs who were present on the date of visit to the college were administered the questionnaire of which 122 were medical professionals and 173 were engineering professionals. The questionnaires were adopted from Promotion of Health – a practical guide (3) with modification to suit local needs. The questionnaire contains apart from respondent's socio-demographic profile, the statements that seems to be the important aspect of their health. The statements cover all the major concepts and dimensions of health (physical, mental, social, behavioural, emotional, spiritual, vocational, environmental and nutritional) with open ended statement to mention any other that is being healthy means to them. From the statements the participants were first asked to select as many numbers of statements that seems to be the important aspect of their health. From the selected statements they were asked to select six most important statements and rank them according

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