



WEEKLY EPIDEMIOLOGICAL REPORT

A publication of the Epidemiology Unit
Ministry of Health

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Stress, academic stress and maintaining work-life balance Part II

This is the second article of a series of 2 articles on the “Stress, academic stress and maintaining work-life balance”.

Manage stress and maintain a healthy work-life balance

To effectively manage stress and maintain a healthy work-life balance, it can be helpful to think of stress as water being poured into a bucket. If too much stress accumulates, the bucket overflows. However, by creating holes in the bucket through effective coping mechanisms, one can prevent stress from building up.

For university students, achieving a balance between academic demands and personal well-being is essential for success. To this end, some practical tips that can be useful.

■ Prioritize self-care & individual health

Firstly, it is important to prioritize self-care, which can often be overlooked in the face of a busy schedule. This involves getting enough sleep, regularly exercising, consuming a healthy diet, and engaging in activities that bring joy.

■ Reduce the pressure

It is also important to set aside time each day to do something that a person enjoys, such as reading a book, watching TV, playing sports, or listening to music. Taking breaks and practising relaxation techniques

like deep breathing or meditation can also help manage stress.

■ Schedules

Creating a schedule can help manage time effectively and avoid feeling overwhelmed. Students can use a planner or calendar to schedule their classes, study time, extracurricular activities, and social commitments while also incorporating breaks and self-care time. By planning ahead, students can stay on top of their academic workload and avoid last-minute cramming sessions, which can contribute to stress.

■ Time management

To effectively manage stress, it's important to organize a person's own time and avoid becoming overwhelmed by too many tasks at once. Prioritize tasks by making a list and deciding which ones need to be done immediately and which ones can wait. Focusing on one task at a time can be helpful, especially when feeling very stressed.

Another way to manage stress is to break large projects or problems into smaller, more manageable tasks. This can help one avoid feeling overwhelmed and make it easier to tackle each task one at a time.

■ Maintain a structure and routine

Keeping a structure for the day can also be helpful in managing stress. Maintaining a routine, such as getting up and going to bed at the same times each day and continuing with usual activities like meeting friends or attending university, can provide a sense of stability and control.

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Stay connected

Maintaining a strong social network is crucial for managing stress and preserving a healthy work-life balance. Dedicate time to cultivate and nurture relationships with family, friends, and colleagues, and be open about feelings with them. Engaging in social activities and forming new friendships can also be highly beneficial.

Say “NO”

As a university student/trainee, there are many opportunities for extracurricular activities, volunteer work, and social events. While it's important to stay engaged, it's also crucial to be selective and prioritize activities that align with an individual's goals and values. Saying 'no' to invitations or opportunities that don't fit into one's schedule or align with priorities is perfectly acceptable.

Try a digital detox

Take a break from technology: Consider disconnecting from digital devices to recharge. It's easy to get caught up in social media and the constant flow of information from digital devices, which can lead to feelings of overwhelm and stress. Try dedicating an hour before bedtime to relaxing activities such as reading, taking a bath, or listening to music without technology. Consider setting specific times each day to check email and social media, and avoid checking the phone or computer outside of those designated times. This can help establish boundaries and reduce information overload.

Talk to someone when struggling

To effectively manage stress and maintain a healthy work-life balance, seeking support from others is essential. It's important to remember that seeking help is a sign of strength and not a weakness. Friends, family, and campus resources such as university counselling services or academic advisors can provide guidance and support for managing academic stress. Talking to a trusted friend or family member can also be helpful for processing emotions and gaining perspective. Don't hesitate to reach out and seek support when feeling overwhelmed, as this can help manage stress and avoid burnout.

Focus on Progress, Not Perfection

Striving for academic success is important, but it's equally crucial to understand that perfection is unattainable. As a university student, it's easy to get caught up in the pursuit of perfect grades or assignments. However, this mindset can be harmful to mental health and create feelings of self-doubt and inadequacy. Instead, shift focus to making progress and improving skills. Recognize and celebrate successes, regardless of how small they may be, and learn from mistakes. Remember that academic success is a journey, not a destination, and it's the progress made along the way that counts.

Resources are available for individuals experiencing stress, anxiety, or depression.

Seek help from mental health professionals available in the majority of hospitals in Sri Lanka. Additionally, contact the '1926 - National Mental Health Helpline,' which is a 24-hour toll-free line. Visit 'NAVODYA,' a walk-in clinic at the National Institute of Mental Health, to schedule an appointment with a mental health professional.

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Table 1: Selected notifiable diseases reported by Medical Officers of Health 14th- 20th Oct 2023 (42nd Week)

RDHS	Dengue Fever		Dysentery		Encephalit		Enteric Fever		Food Poi-		Leptospirosis		Typhus		Viral		Human		Chickenpox		Meningitis		Leishmania-		WRCD			
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	T*	C**		
Colombo	146	12015	0	15	0	14	0	2	0	12	7	293	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	12	301	0	39	0	6	42	100	
Gampaha	110	12034	0	21	0	16	4	12	2	10	20	522	0	10	0	17	0	0	6	262	2	114	0	43	11	100		
Kalutara	47	4276	3	27	0	4	0	1	1	19	13	771	0	2	0	10	0	1	24	483	4	94	0	3	69	200		
Kandy	137	6644	0	37	0	3	0	10	0	21	13	276	2	61	0	4	0	2	12	274	0	24	1	27	90	100		
Matale	41	1466	0	4	0	3	0	1	0	29	1	134	0	14	0	7	0	0	4	61	1	9	8	284	28	100		
NuwaraEliya	4	253	6	145	0	5	0	3	0	49	4	153	1	68	0	5	0	0	6	176	3	31	0	3	62	100		
Galle	45	2550	2	47	0	13	0	6	0	33	12	822	0	72	0	2	0	1	8	323	0	27	0	3	39	100		
Hambantota	5	1300	0	11	0	3	0	1	0	9	7	284	0	68	0	9	0	0	2	137	0	20	4	560	33	100		
Matara	32	1725	0	25	1	9	0	1	0	19	15	481	2	34	1	6	0	2	7	283	0	21	4	177	59	100		
Jaffna	26	2132	10	106	0	2	0	12	3	36	0	12	2	518	1	6	0	2	1	166	0	18	0	2	70	93		
Kilinochchi	2	91	0	12	0	0	0	1	0	16	0	8	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	19	0	2	0	0	42	100		
Mannar	1	86	0	6	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	37	0	6	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	9	0	1	55	100
Vavuniya	4	164	0	11	0	1	0	0	1	25	0	30	0	9	0	2	0	0	0	28	0	13	0	10	19	100		
Mullaitivu	2	123	1	15	0	1	0	4	0	12	0	38	1	7	0	1	0	0	1	19	0	2	0	8	29	100		
Batticaloa	8	2186	5	180	1	9	0	5	0	18	2	89	0	1	0	8	0	3	8	119	1	38	0	1	69	100		
Ampara	4	234	0	9	0	1	0	1	11	64	1	121	0	2	0	2	0	0	8	86	1	56	0	12	15	100		
Trincomalee	5	2018	0	25	0	1	0	1	2	69	2	68	0	15	0	3	0	0	4	73	0	29	0	7	32	99		
Kurunegala	7	1705	1	69	0	10	0	0	0	1	2	57	0	1	0	0	0	0	7	149	1	39	0	0	53	100		
Puttalam	54	2748	4	46	0	16	0	1	0	7	12	367	0	17	1	13	0	2	9	479	2	189	19	501	31	100		
Anuradhapur	15	2924	4	37	0	3	0	1	0	2	5	89	0	8	0	1	0	0	0	102	8	75	0	19	29	100		
Polonnaruwa	4	696	1	14	0	1	0	1	1	9	2	255	1	32	0	4	0	2	2	223	2	45	34	595	31	100		
Badulla	3	539	0	15	0	6	0	1	0	11	2	162	0	7	0	13	0	0	0	79	0	18	10	389	38	100		
Monaragala	34	1054	1	38	0	5	0	0	0	44	2	315	0	55	4	89	0	0	6	171	1	46	1	40	67	100		
Ratnapura	12	658	1	24	0	6	0	0	0	8	3	482	1	37	0	33	0	1	0	65	1	76	0	166	31	100		
Kegalle	11	1999	0	47	1	18	0	3	1	51	27	1101	0	27	0	18	0	2	5	199	0	138	5	177	38	100		
Kalmune	36	2795	0	25	0	2	0	2	1	17	16	629	0	42	0	6	0	0	6	410	2	83	0	39	35	100		
SRILANKA	795	64415	39	1011	3	152	4	71	23	591	169	7596	10	1120	7	266	0	18	138	4689	29	1255	86	3073	44	99		

Source: Weekly Returns of Communicable Diseases (esurveillance.epid.gov.lk). T=Timeliness refers to returns received on or before 20th Oct, 2023 Total number of reporting units 358 Number of reporting units data provided for the current week: 355 C**=Completeness*

Table 2: Vaccine-Preventable Diseases & AFP

14th–20th Oct 2023 (42nd Week)

Disease	No. of Cases by Province									Number of cases during current week in 2023	Number of cases during same week in 2022	Total number of cases to date in 2023	Total number of cases to date in 2022	Difference between the number of cases to date in 2023 & 2022
	W	C	S	N	E	NW	NC	U	Sab					
AFP*	00	02	00	00	00	01	01	00	00	02	02	78	67	16.4 %
Diphtheria	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	0 %
Mumps	01	01	00	00	01	00	01	00	01	05	01	201	74	171.6 %
Measles	21	01	01	01	01	00	05	01	03	34	00	655	19	3347.3 %
Rubella	01	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	00	08	00	0 %
CRS**	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	02	00	0 %
Tetanus	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	06	05	20 %
Neonatal Tetanus	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	0 %
Japanese Encephalitis	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	02	01	100 %
Whooping Cough	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	07	01	600 %
Tuberculosis	70	04	18	09	11	00	09	05	07	133	53	7495	5367	39.6%

Key to Table 1 & 2

Provinces: W: Western, C: Central, S: Southern, N: North, E: East, NC: North Central, NW: North Western, U: Uva, Sab: Sabaragamuwa.
RDHS Divisions: CB: Colombo, GM: Gampaha, KL: Kalutara, KD: Kandy, ML: Matale, NE: Nuwara Eliya, GL: Galle, HB: Hambantota, MT: Matara, JF: Jaffna, KN: Killinochchi, MN: Mannar, VA: Vavuniya, MU: Mullaitivu, BT: Batticaloa, AM: Ampara, TR: Trincomalee, KM: Kalmunai, KR: Kurunegala, PU: Puttalam, AP: Anuradhapura, PO: Polonnaruwa, BD: Badulla, MO: Moneragala, RP: Ratnapura, KG: Kegalle.

Data Sources:
Weekly Return of Communicable Diseases: Diphtheria, Measles, Tetanus, Neonatal Tetanus, Whooping Cough, Chickenpox, Meningitis, Mumps., Rubella, CRS,
Special Surveillance: AFP* (Acute Flaccid Paralysis), Japanese Encephalitis
CRS** =Congenital Rubella Syndrome
NA = Not Available

Number of Malaria Cases Up to End of October 2023,
10
All are Imported!!!

Comments and contributions for publication in the WER Sri Lanka are welcome. However, the editor reserves the right to accept or reject items for publication. All correspondence should be mailed to The Editor, WER Sri Lanka, Epidemiological Unit, P.O. Box 1567, Colombo or sent by E-mail to chepid@sltnet.lk. **Prior approval should be obtained from the Epidemiology Unit before publishing data in this publication**

ON STATE SERVICE

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