

## Stress and sexual dysfunction among call center employees

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### INTRODUCTION

The call center community often defines itself as an industry, with numerous national and international call centers. But there has some dispute among researchers as to whether it is appropriate to refer such thing as the 'call center industry'. Bain and Taylor (1999) argue that it is more appropriate to use the term 'sector' as call centers are found across a wide range of industries and may be similar primarily in terms of their core technologies. Belt, Richardson and Websler (2000) agreed that call centers are not an 'industry' as the term generally defined, but rather represent certain ways of delivering various services using the telephone and computer technologies across traditional industry boundaries.

The basic reason by which employees getting stress in their routine life is nonstop mobile calling, duty to make interaction with customer and complete the target within the time, threat and intensity, make the employees stressful and depressed. Dollard, Dormann, Boyd and Winefield (2003) assessed two unique stressors associated with the human service work *i.e* emotional dissonance, the need to hide negative emotions and client related social stressors. The latter may involve disproportionate customer expectations and verbally aggressive customers. These stressors affect all human service workers, even though they may vary in the extent to which their work involves lasting relationship with customers. They argued that social support and training designed to develop 'role separation' are crucial resources needed to help human service workers cope with the unique stressors of their job. The key stressors in call centers are:

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### **1. Nature of job:**

The primary source of stress reported is inherent to the nature of the job spending all day on the phone dealing with the people one another day after day is difficult. Knights and McCabe (2003) took a different approach to stress in the work place.

### **2. Quality/quantity conflict:**

Call centers are rooted in contradictory tensions and structural paradoxes and confront a number of tradeoffs on that basis. There set a context for attitudes towards the organization and can impose conflicting role requirements of agents.

### **3. Intensity:**

The third central stressor in call center work is intensity. As Bain (2001) argues 'far from beginning either in terminal decline or on the wane, Taylorism in conjunction with a range of either control mechanisms is not only alive, well and deeply embedded in the call center labor process but its malevolent influence appears spreading to previously cincharted territory.'

### **4. Targets:**

There is a fourth feature of some call center work that may engender stress performance targets.

A city based survey of women in the reproductive age group has found that work related stress is playing havoc with women sexual health and affecting their chances of conceiving. International studies in the past have linked stress and sexual dysfunction and infertility among women. Stress hormones released by adrenal gland affect the entire reproductive system. 90% of women were found to suffer from some kind of menstrual irregularity (working at corporate jobs). Those enduring stress for long time including long working hours and unrealistic deadlines had amenorrhea. A study from the university of Berkeley in 2009 showed that stress hormones released by the adrenal gland affect the entire reproductive system.

In Mumbai study done by homoeopathy looked at 125 women with the problem relating to their monthly ovulation cycle. Some not had menses for a few months while some had heavy

bleeding. All of them were working women and had high level of cortisol, stress hormone, said doctor. Stress has several physical manifestations in women life.

## **METHOD**

### **Sample:**

The samples of the present study consist of 100 female employees working in call centers.

### **Tool:**

1. Occupational stress scale
2. Brief sexual function inventory

### **Procedure:**

In the present study 100 females were selected from the call center in Pune, 50 from international and 50 from domestic call center.

### **Result and Interpretation:**

In this research the results are under Mean, SD and t ratio of employees from Domestic and International call centers on stress and sexual dysfunction.

**Table 1:**

<b>Call center</b>	<b>Stress Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t value</b>
Domestic	136.3	21.2	5.33**
International	143.3	11.6	

**Table 2:**

Call center (sexual Dysfunction)	Mean	SD	t value
Domestic	19.7	2.43	1.12
International	28.5	3.81	0.86

The result indicates that employees working in two different call centers differ significantly.

This research results revealed that female employees from international call centers show high stress score and high sexual dysfunction than domestic call center employees, which means the female employees from international call center differed significantly ( $t=5.26$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) than domestic call center female employees.

Results obtained from t test showed that female employees from domestic and international call center differed significantly with one another on stress scores and sexual dysfunction. The reason is that international call center employees have more work stress as compare to that with domestic one. This due to heavy work load, not enough time for social interaction and completion of work within a given period of time. The work culture is more strict and systematic as compared to domestic one. International studies in the past have linked stress t sexual dysfunction and infertility among women.

The overall results of the present study suggest the need for stress management programs for reducing the stress and developing positive thinking among young female employees working in call centers.

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