

## A Practical Approach to Fatigue Patients in Tertiary Care Hospitals- Aprospective Study

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**Abstract :** Fatigue is a subjective feeling of tiredness which is distinct from weakness, and has a gradual onset. Unlike weakness, fatigue can be alleviated by periods of rest. Fatigue can have physical or mental causes. Fatigue is a symptom that may be difficult for the patient to describe and words like lethargic, exhausted and tired may be used. 250 Patients attending OP with a complaint of fatigue in various Medical College Hospitals are taken in for study. After getting consent a questionnaire was used to evaluate the patients. Study period was between 1<sup>st</sup> June to 30<sup>th</sup> June of 2017.33% of patients reported that they skip breakfast, regularly. 63% never expose them to sunlight for at least 20 minutes a day,32% of them are anaemic mainly iron deficiency anaemia,22% never drink 2 litres of water per day, 18% are diabetic ,8%are obese,4% are hypertensive on diuretics,3% are clinical hypothyroid and 2% have chronic renal failure .Taking a careful and complete history is the key to help making the underlying diagnosis of the cause for the symptom of fatigue. In our study not a single cause but multiple causes are present in 38% of the patients hence a holistic approach is required to evaluate the patients with fatigue However, in about one fourth of patients the cause is not found and the diagnosis is not clear.

**Keywords-** Diabetics, Fatigue, Holistic approach, Obese, Questionnaire.

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### I. Introduction

Fatigue is a subjective feeling of tiredness which is distinct from weakness, and has a gradual onset. Unlike weakness, fatigue can be alleviated by periods of rest. Fatigue can have physical or mental causes. Fatigue is a symptom that may be difficult for the patient to describe and words like lethargic, exhausted and tired may be used. Lack of sleep causes fatigue, and can have a negative impact on overall health and well-being of the patients. Seven to eight hours of sleep every night is essential. Sleep apnoea<sup>[1]</sup> is a serious sleep disorder where sufferers briefly stop breathing for short periods during sleep. Most people are not aware this is happening, but it can cause loud snoring, and daytime fatigue<sup>[2]</sup>. Being overweight<sup>[3]</sup>, smoking<sup>[4]</sup>, and drinking alcohol<sup>[5]</sup> can all worsen the symptoms of sleep apnoea. Skipping breakfast or not eating enough, or eating foods that are not nutritious can cause fatigue. Eating a balanced diet<sup>[6]</sup> complete with fruits<sup>[7]</sup> vegetables, whole grains, and protein<sup>[8]</sup>and foods high in sugar and fat can avoid fatigue. Iron deficiency anaemia<sup>[9]</sup> is a common cause of fatigue in women, especially in India and women who experience heavy menstrual periods, and repeated pregnancy may be at higher risk for iron deficiency anaemia. Depression<sup>[10]</sup> causes sadness and anxiety, but it can also cause physical symptoms including fatigue, insomnia, aches and pains. Hypothyroidism causes fatigue, depression, and weight gain.

In moderate amount, coffee does improve alertness and energy. However, too much caffeine can cause jitteriness, increased heart rate or palpitations, high blood pressure, anxiety, and insomnia. In addition, after caffeine wears off, users can 'crash' and feel fatigued. Hidden urinary tract infections can cause fatigue and weakness. Diabetes can cause fatigue with either high or low blood sugars. Dehydration can cause fatigue.

Most experts recommend about eight glasses of water per day, but may need more, if there is physical exertion, or work in a warm environment. Certain foods may contribute to chronic fatigue. If feeling sleepy after eating certain foods, it may be intolerance to that food. Chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia are conditions that can cause persistent, unexplained fatigue that interferes with daily activities for more than six months.

**II. Materials And Method** This study was conducted from 1<sup>st</sup> June to 30<sup>th</sup> June of 2017 and after getting consent from the Institutional Ethical Committee, 250 Patients attending OP with a complaint of fatigue in various Medical College Hospitals were included in the study. After getting informed consent, a questionnaire (shown in Tab.1) was given to the patient and the filled questionnaire was collected back. The questionnaire was valuated at two different centers, which doesn't participate in the study.

**Fig.1.Fatigue questionnaire:**

SL.NO.	QUESTION	OPTION
1.	Do you sleep atleast eight hours every night?	Yes/No/Frequency/Rarely
2.	Do you go to bed at same time every night and wake up the same time each morning?	Yes/No/Frequency/Rarely
3.	Anybody told you that you are snoring?	Yes/No/Frequency/Rarely
4.	Do you experience day time sleepiness?	Yes/No/Frequency/Rarely
5.	Do you eat adequate food and is it nutritious?	Yes/No/Frequency/Rarely
6.	Do you eat more junk foods?	Yes/No/Frequency/Rarely
7.	Are you suffering from following problems? -Excessive Menstruation -Bleeding Piles - Gastric Ulcer	Yes/No/Frequency/Rarely
8.	Are you taking green leaves food (Iron containing foods) frequently?	Yes/No/Frequency/Rarely
9.	Do you think that nobody helps you and feeling alone?	Yes/No/Frequency/Rarely
10.	Is there any history of weight gain, cold intolerance constipation and hoarseness of voice?	Yes/No/Frequency/Rarely
11.	Do you frequently intake coffee, tea or cola?	Yes/No/Frequency/Rarely
12.	Are you a smoker?	Yes/No/Frequency/Rarely
13.	Do you consume alcohol?	Yes/No/Frequency/Rarely
14.	Is there any history of dysuria or frequency of urination?	Yes/No/Frequency/Rarely
15.	Are you a diabetic? Are you having polyuria, polydipsia and polyphagia?	Yes/No/Frequency/Rarely
16.	Do you drink at least 8 glasses of water per day?	Yes/No/Frequency/Rarely
17.	Do you feel thirst frequently?	Yes/No/Frequency/Rarely
18.	Have you found yourself fatigued by everyday activities such as shopping, cleaning or climbing stairs?	Yes/No/Frequency/Rarely
19.	Do you do shift duties?	Yes/No/Frequency/Rarely
20.	Have you experienced any food allergies?	Yes/No/Frequency/Rarely
21.	Does that food elimination in your diet causes improved energy levels?	Yes/No/Frequency/Rarely
22.	Is there any history of unexplained fatigue that interferes with daily activities for more than 6 months?	Yes/No/Frequency/Rarely
23.	Does regular exercise such as walking, yoga increase your energy level?	Yes/No/Frequency/Rarely

### III. Results

Out of 250 patients, 64% of patients were male (n=160) and 36 % were females (n=90) as depicted in Fig.1.33% of patients reported that they skip breakfast regularly and hence feel fatigued in the morning hours., 32% of them are anaemic mainly iron deficiency anaemia , 22 % never drink 2 litters of water per day 18% diabetic ,8%are obese,4% are hypertensive on diuretics 3% are clinical hypothyroid 2% have chronic renal failure

#### IV. Discussion

Since fatigue is a symptom of an underlying condition, the treatment depends upon the condition that is causing the fatigue, regardless of whether it is physical, psychological or a combination of the two. There may be a lag time between when the illness has been treated and the intensity of fatigue symptoms; some symptoms may resolve as soon as the underlying condition is treated. For example, individuals who are anaemic feel much better as soon as their red blood cell count increases, while those recovering from infectious mononucleosis may require weeks to have their energy levels return to normal. Fatigue as a symptom can occur as the result of many causes and therefore, prevention is not an issue. More importantly, the early recognition of fatigue will allow a person to seek medical care and potentially have an earlier diagnosis of the underlying cause of fatigue. Iron-rich foods include meats, beans, broccoli, nuts, iron-enriched cereals, and brown rice with iron supplements, deworming, diagnosing and treating the underlying cause of anemia is a must

For Initial evaluation of fatigue, screening blood tests may include:

- 4.1 CBC, Electrolytes (sodium potassium, chloride, carbon dioxide, and sometimes calcium and magnesium);
- 4.2 Glucose, BUN/creatinine, TSH, ferritin, tests for deficiencies in vitamins B12, D3, folic acid, and iron; CPK (elevated in illnesses that cause muscle inflammation), ESR, CRP;
- 4.3 . The decision to obtain X-rays, CT scans, electrocardiogram (ECG, EKG) and other imaging or testing will depend upon the individual patient's circumstances and what the health care practitioner suspects may be the underlying cause of the fatigue.

#### V. Conclusion

Taking a careful and complete history is the key to help making the underlying diagnosis of the cause for the symptom of fatigue. In our study not a single cause but multiple causes are present in 38% of the patients hence a holistic approach is required to evaluate the patients with fatigue. However, in about one fourth of patients the cause is not found and the diagnosis is not clear

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