

Knowledge regarding child abuse and its prevention among mothers residing in Nedumkandam, Idukki, Kerala

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Abstract

Introduction: Children are vital to the nation's present and its future. Child hood period should be filled with love, with new world to explore and with joy of mastery of oneself and environment. For many children this is dream not reality. The present study was undertaken to assess the knowledge regarding child abuse and its prevention among mothers residing in Nedumkandam, Idukki, Kerala

Method: The present study was an explorative study of 120 mothers residing in selected areas of Nedumkandam. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample. Data were collected by using self-structured questionnaire. There were total 30 questions related to knowledge regarding child abuse and its prevention.

Result: The result showed that 3% of the mothers had inadequate knowledge, 60% of the mothers had moderate knowledge and 37% of the mothers had adequate knowledge regarding child abuse.

Conclusion: The present study concluded that majority of the mothers had moderate knowledge regarding child abuse. The finding indicate that the increasing mother's awareness of child abuse can help them protect their children from such harm.

Keywords: Knowledge; Child abuse; Mothers; Nedumkandam

1. Introduction

Children constitute foundation of a nation. Healthy children grow to become healthy adults with optimal physical strength and emotional poise to become useful member of society and contribute effectively in nation building process^(1,5). Child abuse is the most significant social problem in the worldwide. Child abuse is the physical, sexual or emotional maltreatment of the child. It is any activity that is done forcefully against the child's will. The WHO distinguishes four types of child abuse i.e, physical abuse, sexual abuse emotional abuse and neglect. Physical abuse is inflicting of physical injury upon a child. Sexual abuse is the inappropriate sexual behavior with the child ^(2,4). Emotional abuse includes acts or the failures to act by parents or caretakers using extreme and bizarre forms of punishment. Child neglect is a form of child abuse it includes as a deficit in meeting a child's basic needs^(3,7,8).

Assessing knowledge regarding child abuse is essential to identify the child abuse more effectively and can ensure early intervention. Recent studies shows that Child abuse is a rising issue in our society but it is still stigmatized and not discussed adequately. The present study was undertaken to assess the knowledge of mothers regarding child abuse and its prevention.

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2. Materials and method

The study adopted non experimental descriptive design. Samples were 120 mothers residing in selected areas of Nedumkandam. Purposive sampling technique was used for sampling. The sample size of the study was 120. Mothers having children less than 15 years of age were included in the study. A pre-validated structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Section A consisted of items related to demographic variables. Section B consisted of a questionnaire with 30 questions to assess knowledge of child abuse. The main areas covered included physical abuse, sexual abuse emotional abuse and neglect. Each multiplechoice question has one correct answer and three distracters. Each correct answer was scored as one mark and wrong answer as zero. To interpret the level of knowledge scoring has been as follows.

Inadequate knowledge- Less than 50%, Moderate knowledge- 51-75%, Adequate knowledge- More than 76%.

After obtaining informed consent, the tool was administered. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

3. Result

3.1. Section 1

Table 1 Description of samples according to demographic characteristics N=120

Demographic variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
25-30 years	24	20
31-35 years	34	28
36-40 years	46	39
41-45 years	16	13
Family		
Nuclear family	98	82
Joint Family	22	18
Education of Mother		
Primary education	6	5
Higher secondary	34	28
graduates	49	41
Post graduates and above	31	26
Occupation		
House wife	62	52
Private Job	46	39
Government Job	8	6
Others	4	3
Number of children		
One	32	27
Two	54	45
Three	26	22

More than Three	8	6
Previous Knowledge		
Yes	98	82
No	22	18

The demographic information of mothers presented in Table 1 shows that majority are (39%) in the age group of 36-40 yrs, 82% of the mothers live in nuclear families, 41% of mothers are graduates, 52 % of mothers are house wives, 45% of mothers have two children, 82% of mothers have previous knowledge of child abuse.

3.2. Section 2

Table 2 Knowledge of mothers regarding child abuse and its prevention N=120

Score on level of knowledge	Frequency	Percentage
Adequate Knowledge	44	37
Moderate Knowledge	72	60
Inadequate Knowledge	4	3

Table 3 Mean and standard deviation of knowledge score of mothers regarding child abuse N=120

Area	Mean	SD
Knowledge of mothers regarding child abuse	17.15	3.35

3.3. Section 3

Table 4 Association of the selected demographic variable with the knowledge score N=120

SN	Demographic data	Knowledge on child abuse			Statistical inference
		Adequate	Moderate	Poor	
1	Age				
	25-30 years	16	8	0	Chi square value- 1.67 Table value- 7.82 Not Significant
	31-35 years	16	18	0	
	36-40 years	26	20	0	
	41-45 years	2	10	4	
2	Family				
	Nuclear family	40	58	0	Chi square value- 1.87 Table value- 3.84 Not Significant
	Joint Family	10	8	4	
3	Education of Mother				
	Primary education	1	2	3	Chi square value- 1.9 Table value- 7.82 Not Significant
	Higher secondary	18	16	0	
	graduates	17	32	0	
	Post graduates and above	11	20	0	
4	Occupation				

	House wife	38	36	3	Chi square value- 5.009 Table value- 7.82 Not Significant
	Private Job	12	18	0	
	Government Job				
	Others				
5	Number of children				
	One	12	18	2	Chi square value- 2.18 Table value- 7.82 Not Significant
	Two	23	30	1	
	Three	10	15	1	
	More than Three	3	5	0	
6	Previous Knowledge				Chi square value- 3.14 Table value- 5.9 Not Significant
	Yes	34	64	0	
	No	10	12	0	

Table 4 shows that there is no significant association between the knowledge level of mothers and selected demographic variables

4. Discussion

The aim of the present study was to assess the knowledge of mother regarding child abuse and to associate the findings with selected demographic variables. The demographic information of mothers shows that majority are (39%) in the age group of 36-40 yrs, 82% of the mothers live in nuclear families, 41% of mothers are graduates, 52 % of mothers are house wives, 45% of mothers have two children, 82% of mothers have previous knowledge of child abuse. Most of the mothers 62% had moderate knowledge regarding child abuse, and 37 % of them had adequate knowledge regarding child abuse and 3% of them had inadequate knowledge regarding child abuse. The present study shows that there is no significant association between the knowledge level of mothers and selected demographic variables. This finding is supported by a study conducted by Mrs. Akoijam Sangita Devi, February 2025 which reveals that parents had moderate knowledge regarding child abuse. This concluded that for improvements in child abuse, education, and continuing education programs are advised to provide adequate knowledge⁽⁶⁾.

5. Conclusion

The need of present study was to assess the knowledge regarding child abuse and its prevention among mothers from selected areas of Nedumkandam. 62% had moderate knowledge regarding child abuse . The majority of mothers have an overall average knowledge with good in sexual abuse but still desire more assistance from experts. Strengthening training and awareness programs can significantly enhance child protection and create a safer environment for children.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

Author declares no conflict of interest.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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