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Research Article

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT IDENTIFICATION OF CHILD ABUSE IN PARENTS

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ABSTRACT

In the study around 33% parents knew about different ways of identification of child abuse and 35% were aware about common places where child abuse can occur. Majority of parents (74%) responded that child abuse can be prevented by educating the child and showed interest in having more information on identifying signs of child abuse. One of the biggest social stigmas attached to a society is that of child abuse. Abuse can take place in homes, schools, orphanages, residential care facilities, on the streets, in the workplace, in prisons and in places of detention. Child abuse results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development and dignity.

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INTRODUCTION

Child abuse is more than bruises and broken bones. While physical abuse might be the most visible, other types of abuse, such as emotional abuse and neglect, also leave deep, lasting scars. The earlier abused children get help, the greater chance they have to heal and break the cycle-rather than perpetuating it. By learning about common signs of abuse and what you can do to intervene, you can make a huge difference in a child's life.¹

While physical abuse is shocking due to the scars it leaves, not all child abuse is as obvious. Ignoring children's needs, putting them in unsupervised, dangerous situations, or making a child feel worthless or stupid are also child abuse. Regardless of the type of child abuse, the result is serious emotional harm.²

Need For the Study

All types of child abuse and neglect leave lasting scars. Some of these scars might be physical, but emotional scarring has long lasting effects throughout life, damaging a child's sense of self, ability to have healthy relationships, and ability to function at home, at work and at school. Some effects include:

- Lack of trust and relationship difficulties.
- Core feelings of being "worthless" or "damaged."
- Trouble regulating emotions.

As a responsible adult we too play certain role in nurturing and protecting our family and children. And would not like to place them into dangerous or harmful situations that can affect their lives both physical and mentally.³

And hence the investigator felt the need to find out the awareness and knowledge parents have so that they can be instrumental in protecting and securing the lives of their children.

Problem Statement

A study to assess parent's knowledge in identifying signs of abuse in children in a specific setting in Mumbai.

Specific Objectives

1. To assess parent's basic knowledge regarding child abuse.
2. To assess their knowledge in identifying signs of child abuse.
3. To create an awareness about the existing problem of child abuse and their role in preventing it.
4. To compare the findings of the study with the demographic variables.

Research Approach

Survey method

Research Design

Descriptive survey

Setting

The study was conducted in a selected setting in Mumbai.

Population

The population of the study consisted of parents.

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Sample

The sample consisted of parents randomly selected from the setting.

Sample Size

The samples size in this study was 100.

Sampling Technique

The researcher used random sampling in order to select parents according to the sampling criteria.

Inclusion criteria

All parents irrespective of having or not having children.

Exclusion criteria

Parents not willing to participate in the study.

Tool

Semi-structured interview schedule was used.

Technique

Interview: The data collected through this technique included:

- a. Demographic data.
- b. Information related to signs of child abuse.

Validity

To determine the content validity, the tool was prepared and given to experts from various fields for scrutinizing its adequacy and relevance. Individual evaluation was done by nursing personnel's. Their suggestions were obtained and modifications were incorporated in the tool.

Reliability

The tool was tested for reliability using the inter-rater method. The score from the interview schedule were calculated using Scott's formula.

Significant Findings of the Study

Demographic Data

Majority of the parents belongs to age group of 30-41 yrs (44 samples) and number of parents belongs to age group of 18-29 (27 samples) whereas, very less belonged to age group of 54-65yrs, i.e 12% (12 samples). Around 62% family belongs to Nuclear Family whereas, 33% belongs to joint family and very few were part of Extended family. There were maximum number of Female parents i.e 71 % and Male parents were 29 %. Around 42% (42 samples) of family belongs to below poverty line, however, 33% of samples belongs to middle class socioeconomic status. From the above graph, it is clear that, 60% of parents has 1 to 3 number of children in the family whereas 4% of family has more than 6 children in the family.

Knowledge about child abuse

When enquired about different types of child abuse, around 33% parents answered it includes physical, sexual & emotional mistreatment. However, very few parents i.e 5% answered its only emotional mistreatment & neglect. 35% parents were aware about common places where child abuse can occur, those are child's home, organization and schools or communities. Whereas, 7 % answered it can occur in organizations.

According to 68% of parents, females are more prone for child abuse and 32% answered that both the genders are prone to abuse.

Knowledge in identifying signs of child abuse

29% identified that Bruises, scratches, burns, broken bones, lacerations, as well as repeated "mishaps," and rough treatment that could cause physical injury, are the results of physical abuse. However, 16% identified it as physical, psychological & physiological abuse.

37% identified that Guilt, self-blame, flashbacks, nightmares, insomnia could be effects of Child abuse, whereas 33% said its sexual abuse. Disrupted development, passive behavior identified as Emotional abuse by 37%. However, 36% parents identified it as Torture. Being frequently absent from school, begs or steals food or money, lacks needed medical and dental care, is consistently dirty, lacks sufficient clothing for the weather were identified by 57% as a sign of Poverty, whereas 24% said its sign of Neglect.

Majority of parents (74%) responded that child abuse can be prevented by educating the child, supervising them and keeping them away from strangers. whereas, very few parents (3%) answered only supervision will prevent child abuse. Almost 95% of parents showed interest in having more information on identifying signs of child abuse.

Relationship with selected demographic variables

In relation to the various age group and knowledge score in identifying signs of child abuse. The calculated value of 't' was found to be lesser than the table value of 2 at 0.05 level of significance. This shows that there is no significant difference between the two values. Thus there is no relationship between the knowledge score of various age group with each other. With relationship between parental gender in relation to the knowledge score in identifying signs of child abuse also there was no relationship in between the knowledge score of both the gender.

With relationship between parents belonging to different income group also there was no relationship between the knowledge score of the various income group.

DISCUSSION

53% of children in India face some form of child sexual abuse. The growing complexities of life and the changed social economic conditions have exposed the children to new and different forms of abuse. But the sad state of the affairs is that such heinous acts are reported less. It has such a psychological impact on the mind of the child that he seldom gathers the courage to speak about the act being committed against him or her. In fact child abuse is a violation of the basic human rights of a child. Violence in any form has a very deep impact on the overall development of the child.⁴ Child abuse results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development and dignity.

CONCLUSION

With the increasing demands of healthcare, society has become aware of their healthcare needs, and also because of the increasing cost of health care services, health education has

becomes important in order to make the society capable of meeting their health care needs to a certain extent. Nurses can play a vital role in imparting this knowledge to the community. Nursing students can be taught about the child abuse and its prevention. And in turn the nursing students also can impart the same knowledge to the community.

The nurse educator can also use this data to teach student nurses who can include it in providing health education to all parents.

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