

Awareness of Mothers Regarding Child Abuse and Its Prevention in India

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ABSTRACT

When children's rights are protected, children stand a much better chance of growing up in a society that allows them to thrive. Children have their own rights to live in the healthy society like to be physically and mentally healthy, to have medical facilities, education without and gender discrimination. Even beyond this legislation children are often maltreated in many forms at homes. Objectives of the study were to assess awareness of mothers regarding child abuse in India and to develop an information booklet. A descriptive research design was adopted for the study. Data was collected from a total of 200 mothers at district hospital, Udhampur, J&K. Convenient sampling technique was used to collect data. The tool used for data collection was structured knowledge questionnaire to assess knowledge regarding child abuse and its prevention. The data collected was analyzed by using descriptive statistics. Result revealed that highest (53%) of the mothers are in the age group of 26-30 years having primary education (34%). Majority (79.5%) of the mothers are housewife and (49.5%) had 2 children in the family. Most of the mothers (93%) are from Hindu religion. Researcher found that majority of the mothers (58.5%) had moderately adequate level of knowledge and only 6% of mothers had adequate knowledge regarding child abuse. The overall mean of the knowledge of mothers on child abuse is 17.72 ± 2.847 . The researcher concluded that majority of the mothers had moderately adequate knowledge regarding child abuse and its prevention.

KEYWORDS: Awareness, Child Abuse, Prevention, Information booklet

INTRODUCTION

"The true character of a society is revealed in how it treats its children."

Nelson Madela

Child abuse happens when someone caring for a child hurts a child's feelings or body. It can happen to boys or girls in any family. Child abuse is common. It is important to understand and reduce the risks of abuse for child and be familiar with the signs of abuse and neglect.¹ Approximately 4 million cases of child abuse and neglect involving almost 7 million children are reported each year. The highest rate of child abuse is in babies less than one year of age, and 25 percent of victims are younger than age three.²

Most child abuse occurs within the family. Risk factors include parental depression or other mental

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health issues, a parental history of childhood abuse or neglect, parental substance abuse, and domestic violence. Child neglect and other forms of maltreatment are also more common in families living in poverty and among parents who are teenagers or who abuse drugs or alcohol. Child abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, neglect or combination.³ Signs of child abuse can be frequent bruises, avoid being with the abuser, show signs of emotional trauma, like fear, anger, or trouble relating to or trusting others, sad or depressed, hurt themselves, like cutting, have nightmares or trouble sleeping, act out in class, have trouble paying attention, or be hyperactive etc.⁴

The Child Protection Act 1999 focuses on the impact of the abuse on the child, rather than how often the abuse has occurred.⁵ The Indian Penal Code defines sexual exploitation of children as: forced or unwanted sexual behaviour towards children which includes outraging the modesty of a child, rape, sodomy etc.⁶ POCSO Act, 2012 is a comprehensive law to provide for the protection of children from offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography. It requires special treatment of cases relating to child sexual abuse such as setting-up of special courts, special prosecutors, and support persons for child victims.⁷ This study aims to assess awareness of mothers regarding child abuse and its prevention in Dist. Udhampur, J&K, India with a view to provide information booklet.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A community based cross sectional study was conducted in month of March 2021 among mothers at

RESULT

The data obtained from mothers are organized, analyzed and presented under the following headings:

Section I: Description of Demographic variables

Section II: Knowledge of mothers regarding child abuse and its prevention.

Section I: Description of demographic variables

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of mothers according to demographic variables

Demographic variables	N	%	
Age of mother	<25 yrs	44	22
	26-30 yrs	106	53
	31-35 yrs	39	19.5
	>35 yrs	11	5.5
Education of mother	Illiterate	33	16.5
	Primary	68	34
	Matriculate	57	28.5
	Graduate	42	21
Occupation of mother	Private job	13	6.5
	Govt. job	11	5.5
	Self working	17	8.5
	Housewife	159	79.5
Number of children in the family	1	31	15.5
	2	99	49.5
	3	51	25.5
	>3	19	9.5
Religion	Hindu	186	93
	Christian	07	3.5
	Muslim	03	1.5
	Others	04	02

Analysis of demographic variables shows that highest (53%) of the mothers are in the age group of 26-30 years having primary education (34%). Majority (79.5%) of the mothers are housewife and (49.5%) had 2 children in the family. Most of the mothers (93%) are from Hindu religion.

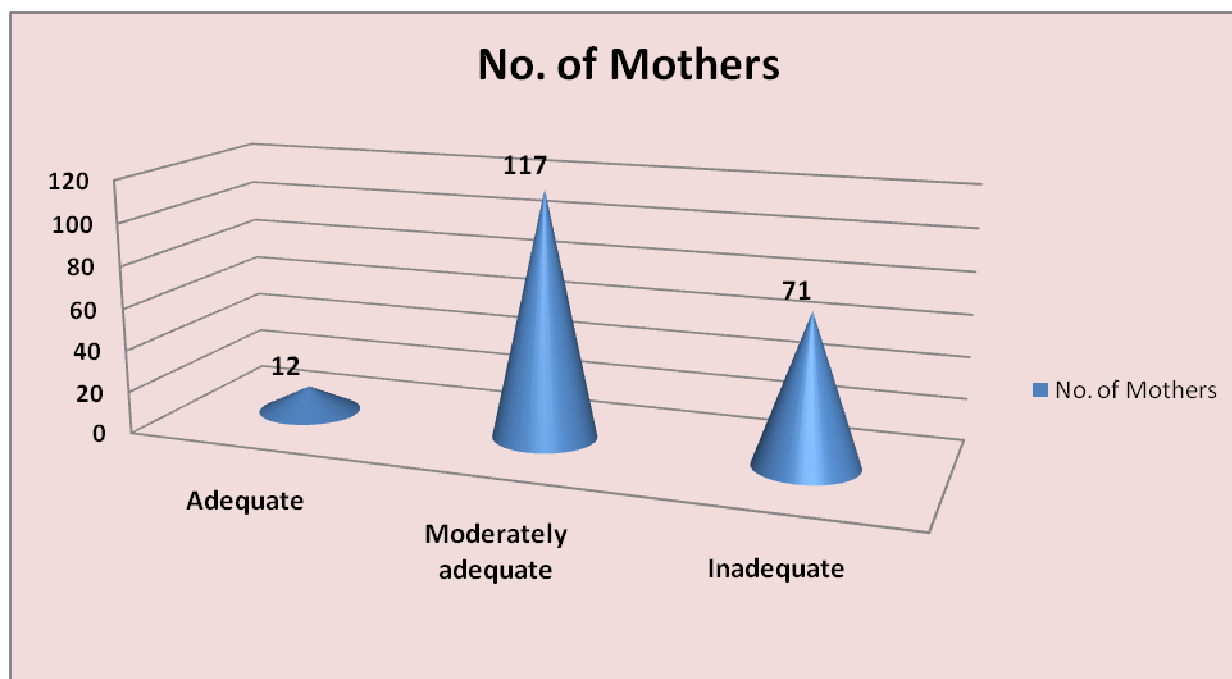
district hospital, Udhampur. A total of 200 mothers having children within age group of 0 months to 12 years were selected by purposive sampling technique. A self structured questionnaire was used to collect the data from the selected samples. Tool consisted of two parts including selected demographic variables of mothers and 25 questions to assess knowledge of mothers regarding child abuse and its prevention. For each correct answer score '1' was given and for the wrong answer score was '0'.

S. No.	Level of knowledge	Score
1.	Adequate	21-25
2.	Moderate	8-20
3.	Inadequate	0-7

A self instructional module was prepared and provided to the mothers. Analysis was done by using descriptive measures (frequency and percentage, Mean and Standard deviation).

Section II: Knowledge of mothers regarding prevention of child abuse**Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of mothers according to Level of knowledge of mothers**

Level of knowledge	No. of mothers
Adequate	12(6%)
Moderately Adequate	117(58.5%)
Inadequate	71(35.5%)

**Fig 1: Bar chart showing the percentage distribution of mothers according to the level of knowledge.**

Knowledge level of 200 mothers was collected by questionnaire method which indicates majority of the mothers (58.5%) had moderately adequate level of knowledge and only 6% of mothers had adequate knowledge regarding child abuse. The overall mean of the knowledge of mothers on child abuse is 17.72 ± 2.847 .

DISCUSSION

A cross-sectional study was undertaken to assess the awareness regarding child abuse and its prevention among mothers at District Hospital, J&K in the month of March 2021. The data was collected using self structured questionnaire from 200 mothers which were selected by purposive sampling technique. The data collected was analyzed by using descriptive statistics. It can be seen from the result that highest (53%) of the mothers are in the age group of 26-30 years having primary education (34%). Majority (79.5%) of the mothers are housewife and (49.5%) had 2 children in the family. Most of the mothers (93%) are from Hindu religion. It was evidenced that majority of the mothers (58.5%) had moderately adequate level of knowledge and only 6% of mothers had adequate knowledge regarding child abuse. The overall mean of the knowledge of mothers on child abuse is 17.72 ± 2.847 .

The study findings expressed that majority of the mothers had moderately adequate knowledge regarding child abuse and its prevention. An informational booklet was provided to enhance

knowledge of mothers regarding child abuse and its prevention.

CONCLUSION

Child abuse is a serious and common problem in and around the nation. Studies have suggested that up to one in four girls and one in eight boys will be sexually abused before they are eighteen years old. Child abuse has negative outcome in children and adolescents that can extend into adulthood. The purpose of the study is to assess knowledge among mothers regarding child abuse. After data collection investigators got to know that 58.5% mothers had moderately adequate level of knowledge, 35.5% mothers had inadequate knowledge whereas only 6% mothers were having adequate knowledge regarding child abuse. Researcher concluded that majority of mothers are aware of child abuse and its prevention.

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