



RESEARCH ARTICLE

A STUDY TO ASSESS THE KNOWLEDGE AMONG MOTHERS REGARDING CHILD ABUSE IN SELECTED AREAS OF PUNE DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Child abuse has negative outcome in children and adolescents that can extend into adulthood, which is a significant problem and needs an effective means of prevention. Child abuse comprises of a wide range of maltreatment including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. Increased number of child abuse case has been observed in the community. Among them children whose parents, especially mothers were not aware of the problems of child abuse. A Quantitative exploratory research was done with the objectives of assessment of knowledge of mothers regarding child abuse and to associate findings with the selected socio-demographic variables. The research design adopted for this study was descriptive design. The research study was conducted in selected rural area of Pune District. Data collection was carried out in the month of October, 2017. Sample of 100 mothers were taken. Tool used were questionnaire consist of two sections. First section included variables for age, level of education, occupation, type of family and age of youngest child were assessed. Second section included 15 items on knowledge assessment on child abuse with scoring on adequate knowledge (8-15) and inadequate knowledge (0-7). The reliability was done by Karl Pearson correlation co-efficient formula. The gathered data were analysed by frequency and percentage. Findings depicts the majority of mothers (48%) were in age group of 20-30 years, 46% of these mothers had primary level of education, most of them(62%) were farmers, 66% of these mothers were living in nuclear families and youngest child of 49% mothers was less than five years of age. 70% mothers had adequate knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

India is the home for the largest population of children in the world. 2011 census depicts that, 39% of the population in the country is represented by the children. ^[1] Child abuse is a state of emotional, physical, economical, and /or sexual maltreatment to a person below the age of eighteen. Child abuse is a globally prevalent phenomenon (UNICEF). ^[2] In India care of a child is family based. Children are dependent emotionally, socially, financially on their parents. The growing complexities of life and the dramatic changes in the socio economic system have played a major role in increasing the vulnerability of children to various newer forms of abuse ^[2]. However, there is little understanding of the extent, magnitude and trends regarding child abuse among the care takers or parents. Frequently occurred abuse reported is physical, sexual and emotional.

Child abuse scenario

The UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children has given the following overview of the situation of abuse and violence against children across the globe ^[3].

- WHO estimates that almost 53,000 child deaths in 2002 were due to child homicide.

- In the Global School Based Student Health Survey carried out in a wide range of developing countries between 20% and 65% of school going children reported having been verbally or physically bullied in school. Similar rates of bullying have been found in industrialized countries.
- UNICEF estimates that in sub-Saharan Africa, Egypt and Sudan, 3 million girls and women are subjected to female genital mutilation every year.
- Only 2.4% the world's children are legally protected from corporal punishment in all settings.

Child abuse in Asia

- The largest population of children in the world live in South Asia and majority of these children lack access to proper health care, nutrition and education.
- The main factors that contribute to the magnitude of the problem of child abuse are poverty, illiteracy, caste system and landlessness, lack of economic opportunities, rural-urban migration. Population growth, political instability and weak implementation of legal provisions ^[3].
- In a recent study in the Republic of Korea parents were questioned about their behaviour towards their children. Two-thirds of the parents reported whipping their

children and 45% confirmed that they had hit, kicked or beaten them^[4].

- It is clear that harsh parental punishment is not confined to a few places or region in the world. Parents in rural India frequently reported, as a punishment, hitting their children with an object on a part of the body other than buttocks and slapping their children on the face or head about as often as slapping them on the buttocks^[5].

Child abuse in India

- A study was conducted by the Ministry of women and child development, Government of India to develop a comprehensive understanding of child abuse. The research was done across 13 states and it involved 2,447 children. In that the 5-12 years of age group are most at risk of different kinds of abuse and exploitation, two out of three children were physically abused; 53.2% of children were reported having faced sexual abuse. Every second a child reported facing emotional abuse^[6].
- The first ever National study on child abuse in April 2007, in India revealed that, more than 53% children report facing one or more forms of child abuse and 5-12 years group faced higher of the abuse, largely unreported.
- In 2013 report India Hell Holes: Child sexual assault in Juvenile Justice Homes, the Asian Centre for Human Rights said that sexual offences against children in India have reached an epidemic proportion. The report stated that more than 48,000 child rape cases were reached from 2001 to 2011 and that India saw an increase of 336% of child rape cases^[7].

Child abuse has negative outcome in children and adolescents that can extend into adulthood. Abused children often suffer physical injuries and stress that may disrupt early brain development. Children who are abused or neglected are at risk for health problems such as depression, alcoholism, drug abuse, smoking, sexual promiscuity, suicide and certain chronic diseases. Mothers play a vital role in taking care of children to provide love and support constantly throughout their life. As a primary care giver they can easily identify the symptoms of child abuse. The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 was enacted to provide a robust legal framework for the protection of children from offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography. The ultimate goal is to stop child abuse before it starts. Strategies that support parents and teach positive parenting skills are very important. It is time to understand and improve public awareness of child abuse prevention, especially for the parents. Several randomised, controlled trials of home visiting programmes demonstrated by professionals have modest effects in the primary prevention of child abuse and neglect^[8]. Nurse-family partnership remains the most effective and longest enduring intervention for high risk families. Their knowledge of the effectiveness of different programmes can help to guide parents towards appropriate services.

Child abuse and juvenile delinquency

Juvenile delinquency, also known as “juvenile offending”, is participation in illegal behaviour by minors (juveniles, i.e. individuals younger than the statutory age of majority)^[9]. So much attention has been given by researchers and professionals

to the critical link between child abuse and juvenile delinquency that the world assumes that child abuse causes later juvenile delinquency. Widom (1989) and Smith and Thornberry (1995) found evidences of this relationship initially. However, more recent studies have found that the relationship between child abuse and juvenile delinquency is more multifaceted. Herrera and McCloskey (2001), found that children who are victims of neglect are at the highest risk of becoming delinquent, with the highest probability, 1 in 10, in becoming involved in criminal activity. Whereas physical abuse victims were reported to have a 9.3% chance of becoming delinquent^[9]. Herrenkohl, Huang, Tajima and Whitney (2003) found abusive discipline to be detrimental as physical abuse. This type of abuse included paddling or severe spanking which left marks or bruises. Children disciplined in this manner develop violent attitudes, later become involved with violent peers, and subsequently exhibited violent behaviour of their own^[10].

Statement of problem

“A study to assess the knowledge among mothers regarding child abuse in selected areas of Pune District.”

Objective of the study

1. To assess knowledge regarding child abuse among mothers in selected rural areas of Pune District.
2. To associate the findings with selected demographic variables.

Assumption

The study assumed that mothers living in rural areas may have adequate knowledge regarding child abuse.

Research approach

In this study the research approach is quantitative research approach. The research data is collected in numerical form and analysed by using descriptive statistics and involves analysis of numerical data.

Research design

The research design adopted for this study was Non experimental descriptive design.

Variables

In this study the dependent variable is the knowledge regarding child abuse.

Research setting

Study was conducted at Hathway Budruk, Tal. Bhor and Nasrapur, Tal. Bhor, District Pune, Maharashtra.

Sampling technique

In this present study the sampling technique adopted was non probability convenient sampling technique.

Sample size

The sample size selected for the study is 100

Data collection tool

Table 1. Data collection tools and techniques

Tool No.	Tool	Variable to be measured	Techniques
Tool I:	Demographic variable	Demographic variable	Paper & pen
Section A	Structured questionnaire	Knowledge assessment of mothers regarding child abuse	Paper & Pen

Inclusion criteria

In this study, inclusion criteria are as follows

- Mothers who are willing to participate.
- Mothers with age range of 18-50 years.
- Mothers who can understand and comprehend Hindi, Marathi and English.

Findings

Data were organized, tabulated and interpreted using descriptive and inferential statistics by maintaining following sequence.

- Section 1: Distribution of samples based on demographic variables.
- Section 2: Distribution of samples based on overall knowledge in relation to child abuse among mothers.
- Section 3: Association of demographic variables with knowledge score of mothers regarding child abuse.

SECTION 1: Distribution of samples based on demographic variables (n= 100)

Table 2. Frequency distribution of subjects according to demographic variables

Demographic variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	20 - 30	48
	31 - 40	38
	41 - 50	14
Level of education	Primary	46
	Secondary	39
	Higher Secondary	07
	Graduate	08
Occupation	Farmer	62
	Business	07
	Job	04
	House wife	27
Type of family	Joint	33
	Nuclear	67
Age of youngest child	Less than 5 years	49
	6 - 12 years	34
	13 - 18 years	11
	19 years & above	6

Section 2: Distribution of samples based on overall knowledge in relation to child abuse among mothers.

Table 3. Itemized frequency distribution of subjects n=100

Questions	Frequency (%)
What is child abuse?	70 (70%)
Who are the commonly abused children are?	75 (75%)
How to suspect child's maltreatment?	54 (54%)
Which of the following parents are typically involved in child abuse?	56 (56%)
What make parents to abuse their children?	53 (53%)
Sign of physical abuse	37 (37%)
Sign of social abuse	56 (56%)
Sign of sexual abuse	59(59%)
Physical consequences of child abuse.	48 (48%)
Indicators of emotional abuse	63 (63%)
Long term consequences of child abuse and neglect.	71 (71%)
Social factors that lead to child abuse	60 (60%)
What is the helpline number to report incident for child abuse?	39 (39%)
How to prevent your children from Being abused?	74 (74%)
What advise will you give your child For his/her safety?	81 (81%)

Table 4. Correlation of demographic variables with knowledge level of subjects regarding child abuse n=100

Demographic variables	Frequency	Adequate Knowledge F(%)	Inadequate Knowledge F(%)
Age	20 - 30	48	36 (36%)
	31 - 40	38	25 (25%)
	41 - 50	14	09 (09%)
Level of education	Primary	46	33 (33%)
	Secondary	39	28 (28%)
	Higher Secondary	07	06 (06%)
	Graduate	08	03 (03%)
Occupation	Farmer	62	45 (45%)
	Business	07	04 (04%)
	Job	04	02 (02%)
Type of family	House wife	27	18 (18%)
	Joint	33	17 (17%)
	Nuclear	67	52 (52%)
Age of youngest child	Less than 5 years	49	36 (36%)
	6 - 12 years	34	24 (24%)
	13 - 18 years	11	09 (09%)
	19 years & above	06	05 (05%)

This table shows that samples whose age is between 20-30 have 36% of adequate knowledge, samples whose age is between 31-40 have 25% of adequate knowledge and samples whose age is between 41-50 have 09% of adequate knowledge. Samples whose have primary education have 33% of adequate knowledge, secondary education have 28% of adequate knowledge, higher secondary have 06% of adequate knowledge, graduate 03% have adequate knowledge. Samples who has occupation as farmer has 45% have adequate knowledge, samples who have occupation as business has 4% have adequate knowledge, samples who have jobs have 02% have adequate knowledge and housewife have 18% adequate knowledge about child abuse. Samples who belong to joint family have 17% adequate knowledge, and nuclear family have 52 % of adequate family. Samples who have youngest children less than five years have 36% of adequate knowledge, 6-12 years have 24% of adequate knowledge, 13-18 years have 09% of adequate knowledge and above 19 above have 05% of adequate knowledge.

SECTION 3: Association of demographic variables with knowledge regarding child abuse.

Table 5. Association of demographic variables with knowledge regarding child abuse n=100

Demographic variables	Fisher exact test value
Age	1.110<0.005 (NS)
Level of education	4.973<0.005 (NS)
Occupation	0.938<0.005 (NS)
Types of family	7.139<0.005 (NS)

Table shows that the association of the demographic variables with knowledge scores, it also depicts that calculated P value is greater than 0.05 level of significance hence there is none of the demographic variable such as age, level of education, types of family, age of youngest child, occupation are not associated with the knowledge score of the participants.

DISCUSSION

Major findings: Findings depicts the majority of mothers (48%) were in age group category of 20-30 years, 46% of these

mothers had primary level of education, majority of mothers (62%) were farmers, 66% of mothers are living in nuclear families and 49% of mothers have their child less than five years of age. 70% mothers had adequate knowledge. There was no significant association of the demographic variable such as age, level of education, types of family, age of youngest child, occupation and the level of knowledge of the participants.

In a study done by Georgia Babatsikos it was found that the parents' level of knowledge is strongly associated with knowledge and positive attitudes towards child sexual abuse prevention [11]. However in the present study it was found that even though majority of the mothers had only primary level of education they had adequate knowledge regarding child abuse. In another study done to assess the knowledge of parents regarding child abuse in Faridabad, Punjab only 8% parents had good knowledge and 92% parents had average knowledge on child abuse. It was also found that there was no significant association between the knowledge level of parents with age, sex, occupation, religion, Socio-economic status, parental status, previous source of knowledge. Association was seen only with education status [12]. In this study however there was no association of knowledge scores with the demographical variables. Also almost 70% of the mothers had adequate knowledge related to child abuse.

Recommendations

- A similar study may be replaced on a large sample there by findings can be generalized for the larger setting.

Implications of the study

The findings of the study definitely have implications of nursing practice and research.

Nursing practice: Nursing practice could be improved using the results of the research. Now a day's nurse are not only working in hospital setting but also working in community setting as community health nurses. Being aware of child abuse as a parent is important to help the children for their better future socially, spiritually and mentally. It will help to improve the well being of the children. A nurse work as community health nurses can help the authority to understand the above mentioned important predictors of knowledge of mothers and well being of children. The nurses and administration can organize and plan for various programmes to help the mothers to improve their knowledge and well being status and thus obviously the quality of health care of the country will be improved.

Nursing research: The research helps to plan interventional strategies for mothers who have inadequate knowledge. This study can incorporate the importance of further research in the knowledge assessment of mothers.

Limitations: The limitations of the study were-

- Samples were limited only to specific area.
- Small number of subjects (100) limited the generalization of the study.
- Participants were selected through non-probability techniques limited the generalization of the study.

Conclusion

Though a lot needs to be done to deal with this menace of child abuse, it can be concluded through this study that majority of mothers have adequate knowledge regarding general areas related to child abuse. There are still a few areas that lack adequate knowledge like identifying the signs & symptoms of child abuse and whom to approach in case your child has been abused. This knowledge is more vital in preventing child abuse, which is found to be missing.

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