

Mothers' Awareness about Accidents Among Toddlers

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A study to identify the knowledge of mothers on prevention of accidents among the toddlers in a selected urban community of Mangalore was conducted in the year of 1999 at Dr. M.V. Shetty Institute of Health Sciences, Vidyanagar, Mangalore, affiliated to Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Bangalore.

The toddlers' age is a trouble some age. Although this can be a challenging time for parents and child as both of them learn to know each other better, it is extremely important period for developmental achievement and intellectual growth. Toddlers are midway between complete dependency and requiring independence and mothers play major role in this process.

Although toddlers have real drive for autonomy or independence, their judgment about safety and appropriate behavior is still virtually nil. It is important to supervise these young explorers so that their natural curiosity does not lead them into dangerous situations that can result in injury.

Life is accident more so for a young child exploring his surroundings. The types of accidents are related to the age, sex, intelligence, social circumstance and personality of the children.

According to WHO, "an accident is an event, independent of human will, caused by an outside force acting rapidly and resulting in bodily or mental injury. The occurrence of injury is unintended." Majority of accidents are preventable.

Accidents on road, at play or at home leave many children disabled. Better standards of safety

at home and roads can minimize these hazards. Accidents at home are more common than on the roads, and relatively few occur in outdoor. Death by fire or smoke inhalation is the commonest cause of mortality from accidents in the home. Overcrowding at home increases the risk.

Lack of outside play facilities is also responsible for the accidents. Accidents at home occur more often when the home routine is changed. Many medicines are kept outside within easy reach of young children. Household materials like kerosene, burning stoves, buckets filled with water remain unprotected and parental supervision is either lax or not possible. Falls from stairs or while climbing the chairs are common. Laceration is the commonest after fall from injury as a result of playing with knives and forks. Head injury is common after fall from stairs. Parental carelessness especially mothers' lack of supervision and ignorance are the chief factors for accidents at home. Most accidents at home can be prevented.

In developing countries, there are valid factors, which affect the health of children. Adopting appropriate preventive measures and raising the level of knowledge of people, mainly mother is required. Lack of knowledge and awareness about prevention of accidents in toddlers, which are influenced by illiteracy, low social class, psycho-

logical stress and unsafe environmental disorders and decreased knowledge of mother regarding the increased mobility and easy locomotion of toddler with developed gross motor and fine motor skills lead to accidents.

Most of the minor accidents are unavoidable but major and serious accidents can be prevented by adults caring for their children. Mothers play a major role in this process.

Objectives of the Study

- ◆ Identify the knowledge of mothers regarding types of common accidents among the toddlers.
- ◆ Identify the knowledge of mothers regarding prevention of accidents among toddlers at home.
- ◆ Compare the level of knowledge of mothers regarding prevention of accidents among toddlers with various extraneous variables.

Methodology

Research approach selected for the study was explorative cross sectional survey method. The study was conducted in the Panjimogaru village of Kulur UFWC. The samples consisted of 150 mothers. Multi static random sampling technique was used to select 150 mothers and a structured interview schedule was used to

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collect the data. This schedule has two sections.

Section-A includes demographic data which includes type of family, religion, per capita income per month of the family, age of the mother, literacy status, occupation of the mother.

Section-B deals with knowledge items, which require responses, related to type of common accidents, primary prevention and secondary prevention of accidents.

The above three areas of section - B were splitted into three parts. Part - I dealt with types of common accidents among toddlers such as cuts and laceration, falls, burns and scalds, drowning, poisoning, suffocation, foreign body aspiration, electrocution and bites.

Part - II consisted of 10 questions related to prevention of 10 types of accidents. Each question dealt with the primary and secondary prevention related to one type of accidents. Thus for each question there were two areas.

Area 'a' includes 8 items on primary prevention and area 'b' includes 4 items related to secondary prevention. Thus for each type of accidents there were 8 items related to primary prevention and 4 items related to secondary prevention.

Initially the items were more with regard to primary and secondary prevention but it was suggested by the experts to reduce the number of items and to have similar number of items for all primary prevention and secondary prevention of accidents. Thus it was modified to 8 items for each question related to primary prevention and 4 items for each question related to secondary prevention.

Further, in the area 'b' of the part II section, there was one additional question like "if any" in or-

der to know mothers traditional practice on secondary prevention of accidents among toddlers. It does not have any scores as they were related to traditional practices and has not been specified in any standard literature.

Findings of the study

Association between demographic variables & knowledge scores of mothers on prevention of accidents among toddlers

Variables	d.F	Tabulated x2 Values	Level significance
Type of family	2	14.82	P<0.01 Highly Significance
Religion	2	21.11	P<0.01 Highly Significance
Per capita income/month	1	1.06	P>0.05 N S
Age of the mother	1	9.15	P<0.05 significant
Education status	1	29.87	P<0.01 Highly Significance
Occupation	1	4.62	P<0.05 Significance

Chi-square tests were calculated to find out relationship between the demographic variables & knowledge scores of mothers. It was observed that there was highly significant association between the knowledge scores of the mother in relation to the type of family, religion & educational status of mother and the significant association was observed between the knowledge score and age of the mother as well as occupation of the mothers.

The findings show that highest percentage of mothers was from nuclear family and mothers from Hindu & Muslims were higher when compared to Christians. Most (80%) of the mothers were from middle class and 78.67% of the mothers were between 21 to 30 years of age and more than 1/3 of the mothers were illiterate. Majority of them were housewives and around 40% were beedi workers.

Mothers had average knowledge on the type of common accidents but bites as a common acci-

dent was known only to few mothers. Mean knowledge score was 36.68 which was 46% of the total scores shows poor knowledge on primary prevention.

The mean score was 18.66 for secondary prevention which around 47% of the scores, which also reveals very poor knowledge

on secondary prevention. Out of 80 items related to primary prevention, only 30 items were answered correctly by 50% or more mothers which reveals poor knowledge on various knowledge items related to primary and secondary prevention of accidents. However, most of the mothers had knowledge on consulting the doctor for the medical attention for all type of accidents.

Knowledge of mother when compared to the demographic variables reveals a significant association between the mother's knowledge and age of the mother in regards to type of common accidents. Highly significant association was observed when compared to primary prevention of accidents. Further, significant association was also observed between knowledge and age of the mothers. Significant association was also observed between knowledge scores & prevention of accidents & type of family, religion & age of the mother.

Conclusion & Recommendations

From the findings, it can be concluded that mothers under study were more from nuclear family and Muslims were highest. Most of them were between 21-30 years of age and were from poor socio-economic status. One third were illiterate. Mothers had poor knowledge on prevention of accidents among toddlers. Area wise knowledge shows that in all the areas such as knowledge on common accidents, primary prevention, secondary prevention of accidents, the knowledge score were poor which show poor knowledge on all areas. However in area of secondary prevention, most of the mothers had knowledge on seeking medical attention for all types of accidents which indicates that mothers had concern for their children's health.

Knowledge of the mothers on prevention of accidents seems to have significant association with type of

family, religion, age, educational status and occupation of the mother.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made :

The findings will help the nurse to plan health education on home safety and injury prevention programmes for mothers. Nursing professionals working in the hospital settings can find opportunity to teach and improve the knowledge of mothers. As a nurse practitioner and educationist, a self-learning module can be prepared to teach the mothers on prevention of accidents. Health workers can educate the mothers during their home visits on primary prevention and first-aid. It helps to plan formal and informal teaching programme for nursing professionals in community so that they can help increase the knowledge of mothers regarding prevention of ac-

cidents among toddlers.

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