

Effectiveness of a Self-Instructional Module (SIM) on the Knowledge of Teachers on Emotional and Behavioural Problems (EBP) among School Children of Selected Schools in Goa

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Introduction

“Children are like buds in a garden and should be carefully and lovingly nurtured as they are the future of the nation and the citizens of tomorrow,” said former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. The prosperity of every nation is dependent on its next generation. Research has proved that the emotional, social and physical development of children has a direct effect on the child’s overall development and this effect is also seen in adulthood.

According to Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the prevalence of child and adolescent mental disorders in the age group of 1-16 years in India have been around 12.8 percent which is a cause for concern (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Policies and Plans, 2005). School teachers form an essential link between the school and the family and need to be equipped with knowledge especially regarding the behavioural and emotional problems of school children to assist in early identification and referral of the problem, if required.

Children dramatically change over time; the first two or three years of life are marked by striking changes of growth followed by various developmental and social changes that continue to occur during six to twelve years also known as ‘Middle Childhood’. This is an exciting time of development when children enter into school, focus on their abilities and understand concept of the world around them. The importance of middle childhood as a developmental period was put forward by Freud and Piaget, the renowned theorists who saw this period as a plateau in development, a time used by the child to consolidate the gains of the rapid growth of the pre-school years, to preparing oneself for the dramatic changes of adolescence. This period gives children the opportunity to develop their competencies, interests and a healthy sense of confidence so that they can master and control their worlds.

Need and significance

The statistics gathered from various sources and stud-

ies have shown the extent of mental health problems and the need for interventions.

In India, the prevalence of mental disorders (Mental health Care, 2013) is 6-7 percent for common disorders and 1-2 percent for severe disorders. Nearly one-third of the Indian population is less than 14 years of age and 12 percent of children between 4-16 years suffer from psychiatric disorders. The majority of the children do not receive mental health services as only 10- 22 percent are recognised by primary health workers (ICMR, 2005). We need to understand that unless children with mental problems receive appropriate treatment, their problems are likely to persist, their social, educational and vocational prospects are diminished, leading to devastating effects on their physical and emotional development. If untreated, they continue into adolescence and adulthood leading to school dropouts, antisocial behaviour, poor employment history and poverty.

In India, as in 2013, there were only 43 Government-run hospitals, 3800 psychiatrists, 850 psychiatric social workers, 898 clinical psychologists and 1500 psychiatric nurses serving a population of a billion, quite inadequate to serve a developing, vast country. To ensure the mental health of its future generation it would be appropriate to train teachers to identify and address emotional and behavioural problems (EBP) in school by equipping them with the appropriate knowledge to understand and solve the problem.

Objectives

The objectives of the study were, to:

1. Assess the knowledge of school teachers on EBP among children using a structured questionnaire.
2. Find an association between the knowledge of school teachers and the selected demographic variables (age of the teacher, gender, education, marital status, number of children, years of experience, encounter with children having EBP, confidence of the teacher to handle the child with EBP, training

or programme attended by the teacher on EBP in school children).

3. Assess the effectiveness of the SIM based on the pre- and post-test knowledge scores of the teachers.

Hypotheses

H₁ - There will be significant difference between the mean pre-test and post-test knowledge scores of school teachers on the emotional and behavioural problems of school children.

H₂ - There will be significant association between the knowledge of school teachers and selected socio demographic variables.

Review of Literature

A study done in Bangalore (Priyadarshini, 2010) indicated significant level of gain in knowledge of a planned teaching programme on the knowledge of primary school teachers.

Results of the study by Garg et al (2014) conducted on primary school teachers on knowledge regarding selected common behavioural problems of children showed an increase in knowledge to 75.83 percent, which has indicated that the structured teaching programme is an effective tool.

Kodi & Hymavathy (2014) reported an increased level of knowledge on the post-test conducted among high school teachers on administration of the SIM on an adult heart healthy diet which indicated that the SIM is an effective teaching learning method.

Conceptual framework: In the present study the researcher adopted the modified conceptual framework based on Ludwig Von Bertalanffy's (1968) General System Theory. Ludwig's theory model focuses on three areas: (1) Input, (2) Throughput, and (3) Output.

Input: According to the General System theory input refers to the matter, energy or information from the environment into the system. In this study the various demographic variables of the teachers are considered as inputs and both are open systems which are interacting with each other.

Throughput: Throughput refers to the process by which matter, energy and information is modified or transformed within the system. In the present study, it includes the self instructional module (SIM) on common

emotional and behavioural problems among school children with its content as follows:

- i. Meaning of emotional and behavioural problems
- ii. Types of emotional and behavioural problems (Poor interpersonal skills, Impulsiveness, Emotional disturbances, Learning difficulties, Uncontrolled aggressiveness, Physical complaints)
- iii Risk factors of emotional and behavioural problems
- iv. Signs and symptoms of these problems
- v. Management of the problem
- vi. Referral services.

Output: It refers to matter, energy and information that are released from the system into the environment. In this study it refers to the outcome of the system interactions i.e. change in the knowledge level of subjects regarding emotional and behavioural problems among school children.

Methods and Procedures

The research approach used for the study was a one group pre-test post-test design. Validity and reliability of the tool (structured questionnaire) was tested by eleven experts. Permissions and ethical clearance were obtained from the concerned authority. The sample was selected using the convenient sampling technique. It consisted of 54 school teachers from various schools in Goa. Consent was taken from the teachers, pre-test was conducted, SIM was distributed and the post-test was conducted on the eighth day. The pre-test and post-test knowledge of the teachers was assessed on the emotional and behavioural problems of school children to evaluate the effectiveness of the SIM.

Results

The collected data from the respondents was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics and presented in the form of tables, graphs and diagrams.

There was no statistically significant association between the demographic variables and the pre-test score of the respondents.

The findings of this study revealed that the mean post-test score was higher than the mean pre-test score. The calculated 't' value was greater than the table value of $p < 0.001$. Hence it is concluded that there was a significant gain in knowledge of school teachers through the SIM.

Discussion

In this study there was no association between the demographic vari-

Table 1: Analysis of pre-test and post-test knowledge score of school teachers regarding emotional and behavioural problems of school children

Score range	Level of knowledge	Pre-test score	No. of respondents	%	Post- test score	No. of Respondents	%
< 50%	Poor	<13	23	42.59	< 13	5	9
51- 74%	Average	14-19	27	50	14-19	27	50
> 75%	Good	20-26	4	7.40	20-26	22	40.74

Table 2: Evaluation of knowledge scores of the school teachers

Score	Total Mean	Paired 't' value	Level of significance
Pre-test	14.481	11.661	p<0.001
Post-test	18.574		

ables and the pre-test knowledge scores of the teachers. Half the school teachers (50%) had average level of knowledge, 42.59 percent had poor level of knowledge and 7.40% percent had good level of knowledge in the pre-test. These findings are similar to those Bhanwara (2011) that stated that 93.34 percent had an average knowledge score in the pre-test (Anto Jacob, 2014), 84 percent had average pre-test scores while Pawar & Mohite (2014) showed that 71.70 percent teachers were having average pre-test scores so that there was no significant association between the pre-test knowledge scores and the demographic variables. The study by Bhanwara (2011) revealed an association between age, experience and designation of the teacher with the pre-test knowledge score. This may be due to the interest of the teachers to learn through experience about handling children with EBP. In the Post-test, the majority (50%) of school teachers had average level of knowledge, 40.74 percent had good level of knowledge and 9 percent had poor level of knowledge scores whereas 75 percent had a good knowledge score in the post test. Pawar & Mohite (2014) found that 91.70 percent teachers had good knowledge post-test scores while Anto & Jacob (2014) stated that 46 percent had good knowledge scores.

These results were consistent with the study conducted by (Priyadarshini, 2010) in Bangalore that shows that there was significant increase in the post-test knowledge score. This indicates the effectiveness of the teaching programmes conducted for the teachers.

Implications

Nursing administrators need to initiate policy making at the hospital and community settings to develop public awareness on the common emotional and behavioural problems of school children thus promoting mental health. This would benefit teachers, school going children and their families.

Nurses and nursing students need to integrate the school mental health programme with teachers. The researcher's intervention can be used to teach and improve the knowledge of school teachers on early identification, management and referral of children with emotional and behavioural problems of school children leading a way to mentally healthy children in the community.

The teacher's training curriculum must include in detail how to identify and assist children with emo-

tional and behavioural problems thus providing the teachers adequate knowledge to handle these problems. The teacher being equipped with knowledge on these aspects gives the teacher a greater scope of identifying cases as the teacher compares the behaviour of the child with a large group of students at school rather than a parent comparing the behaviour of the child with siblings at home.

Recommendations

1. A similar study can be conducted considering an experimental approach having a control group with larger samples.
2. A research study can be conducted on knowledge of parents / mothers /fathers regarding EBP in school children.
3. A follow-up study could be undertaken to know the effectiveness of the SIM for periodic assessment of knowledge.
4. A study to assess the prevalence of EBP of school children can be undertaken.

Conclusion

Magnitude of mental disorders is a cause of common concern. Due to lack of training, the teachers will not recognise these signs as the onset of a childhood psychiatric disorder and will not refer these children for help. This module can be used to provide knowledge to teachers on the common emotional and behavioural problems among school children thus assisting in early detection and prevention of mental disorders.

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