Original Research Article

Effectiveness of play and learn strategies on knowledge regarding prevention of child abuse among preschoolers and their mothers at selected Anganwadis of Vijaypur

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ABSTRACT

Background: Abuse, especially of children, is a widespread problem. It is crucial to be aware of the warning signs of child abuse and neglect and take preventative measures. The World Health Organisation estimated that 1 billion children (Aged 2-17 yrs) had been victims of violence in 2017. In 2014, UNICEF said that sexual abuse affected 120 million children worldwide. Mental and physical health may be permanently damaged. Objective was to assess the knowledge and to evaluate the effectiveness of the play and learn strategies (PALS) regarding prevention of child abuse among pre-schooler and their mothers.
Methods: This study employed the "One group Pre-test, Post-test" pre-experimental design. Non-probability purposive sampling was used. The sample includes 100 mothers and 100 preschoolers. A pre- and post-test self-administered knowledge questionnaire was employed. Data were examined using descriptive and inferential statistics to meet study aims.
Results: Present study indicates considerable pre-test knowledge level (p<0.05) among students. After intervention (Play and learn technique), preschoolers' post-test knowledge score improved to 7.86 from 5.16. The mean post-test knowledge score of mothers was 17.6 following intervention, compared to 5.93 pre-test. Education improves preschoolers' and mothers' post-test child abuse prevention knowledge, according to research.
Conclusions: Investigators found toddlers prone to child maltreatment. Play and learn performed well to teach kids about child abuse prevention.

Keywords: Child abuse, Parental knowledge, Physical abuse, Play and learn technique

INTRODUCTION

Children develop from birth to adolescence. The third stage of development is pre-school, which lasts 3 to 6 years.[1] Slow physical growth is typical among pre-schoolers. By this point, most physiological systems are mature. Movement is the main gross motor skill during this time, while fine motor skills improve.[2] Pre-schoolers are full of wonder, wonderment, and energy. Pre-schoolers' natural inclination to explore the world around them might lead to moments of distraction. Even though it seems your child isn't paying attention to you, they may be processing what you said only five minutes earlier.[3] Hurting a child is considered child abuse.[4] Neglect, physical abuse, psychological abuse, and sexual abuse are the four basic categories of abuse.[5] The behavioural changes of abused children include hostility, violence, hyperactivity, changes in academic performance, melancholy, anxiety, strange worries, and a rapid lack of self-assurance.[6] According to data from the National Crime Record Bureau, which

indicated a 22% increase in such incidents from the previous year, as many as 109 children were sexually molested every day in India in 2018.[7] A study on assessment of current status of child neglect among 1326 Chinese aged between 3-6 years revealed that 51.89% (688 cases) of children were victims.

Mother with low education level, single parent families and remarried families have higher child neglect rate. The study warranted for more attention should be paid to such children to reduce child neglect rate.[8] Play in preschool promotes the development of strong language and vocabulary skill, imagination and creativity can also be strengthened through organized play. So it is believed that children will learn better things by play during this period.[2] Play and Learn Strategies (PLAS) is a program which provide a viable solution to address child abuse, as they are intended to prevent the abuse from occurring, provide knowledge and skills that decrease children's risk for abuse.

Objectives

Objectives were to assess the pre-test level of knowledge regarding child abuse, assess the effectiveness of play and learn strategies regarding the prevention of child abuse and to find the association between pre-test knowledge scores of pre-schoolers and their mothers with their selected demographic variables.

METHODS

Type of study, design, location and duration

A quantitative evaluative research approach which is a Pre experimental design of one group pre-test and post-test conducted at selected Anganwadies (Shanti Nagar and Sheikh Colony Anganwadies) of Vijayapur. Karanataka. Study was conducted from 26 April 2021 to 15 May 2021.

Study population and variables

All pre-schoolers age 3-5years with their mothers. The independent variable is play and learn strategies (PALS) for preventing child abuse, the dependent variable is preschoolers' and their mothers' knowledge of preventing child abuse, and the demographic variables are child-age, gender, mother-age, education, religion, occupation, number of kids, family type, and information source.

Sample size and sampling technique

Total 100 Pre-schoolers and their mothers were included and purposive sampling technique was used.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

For children, Children between the ages of 3-5 years and their mothers, both male and female children who can understand Kannada and English. For Mothers: Only biological mothers were included. For Children, Pre-schoolers, those who have any health issues. For Mothers; Mothers those who have any physical or mental illness were excluded.

Data collection process

The data gathering procedure is initiated after developing an appropriate instrument that has been validated by topic experts and after determining its suitability through a pilot study. The study was carried out in Vijaypur's Selected Anganwadies. The Anganwadies Supervisor grants permission for data collection on Day 1 (Pretest): Purposive sampling was used by the researcher to choose 100 samples. The subject's understanding of child abuse prevention was evaluated using a pre-validated tool on the same day that the Play and Learn Strategies were given. Steps include Day 2: Physical Abuse, Day 3: Emotional Abuse, Day 4: Sexual Abuse, Day 5: Child Neglect, Day 6: Symptoms and Prevention, and Day 7: PALS, which asks for answers to questions pertaining to Prevention of Child Abuse. This action aims to increase preschoolers' and their mothers' understanding of child abuse prevention. Day 14 (post-test): The investigator conducts an evaluation and termination with the same group of preschoolers and their mothers, inquiring about their performance and providing feedback on their efforts. Because the respondents cooperated, information was gathered and organized for data analysis.

Data analysis

The various categories for analysing the numerical data based on the objectives of the study are given below. demographic Performa would be analyzed using frequency and percentage. Mean pre-test and post-test knowledge scores would be analyzed by using mean, standard deviation. Paired t test was used to determine the effectiveness of Play and learn strategies programme. The association of pretest knowledge score and demographic variables would be tested by using the probability test.

RESULTS

A total of 100 samples of pre-schoolers along with their mothers are included in the study. Demographic Characteristics of the samples: Preschoolers' demographic results include: 64.0% of the children were girls, and 44.0% of the children were under 5 years old. According to demographic information on the moms, 38.0% of the mothers were between the ages of 30-35, and 35.0% had only had an elementary education. 71 (71.0%) of them, or the majority, were Hindu. Of 100 moms, 45 (or 45.0%) had three children or more. Of 100 moms, 45 (45.0%), or the majority, are members of nuclear families. 23 (23%%) of the mothers were businesswomen. 51 (51.0%) out of 100 moms said they had never heard of child abuse (Table 1-2).

Table 1: Percentage distribution of children according to their age and gender of preschooler (n=100).

Variables	%
Age	
3.00	22.0
4.00	34.0
5.00	44.0
Gender	
Boys	36.0
Girls	64.0

Table 2: Percentage distribution of mothers according to their baseline character of mothers (n=100).

Variables	%
Age of mothers	
20-25	8.0
25-30	19.0
30-35	38.0
35-40	35.0
Education of mothers	
Non-Formal	17.0
Primary	35.0
Secondary	23.0
Graduates & above	25.0
Religion	
Hindu	71.0
Muslim	22.0
Christian	7.0

Pre-schoolers and mother's knowledge regarding prevention of child abuse: Preschoolers' pre-test mean knowledge score was 5.16, with SD 1.84, and mothers was 5.93, with SD 4.94 (Table 3). The effectiveness of the play and learn strategies on knowledge regarding prevention of child abuse among pre-schoolers and their mothers was measured through the changes in the mean score of pre-tests and post-test (Table 3). The mean scores on child abuse prevention knowledge were compared using a t test. The t values for preschoolers and mothers are -14.76 and -21.39, respectively, and both are significant (<0.0001) (Table 3).

Association between pre-test knowledge regarding prevention of child abuse among pre-schoolers and their mothers with selected baseline variables is mentioned in (Table 3) which illustrates the association between the sociodemographic variables with preschooler and mothers' knowledge score. A probability test showed that there was no significant association between knowledge level and their selected demographic variables, but it was highly associated with demographic variables such as child gender, mother age and source of information at $p<0.05$ (Table 4).

DISCUSSION

The investigator observed that on the pre-test, Preschoolers' pre-test mean knowledge score was 5.16, with SD 1.84, and mothers' was 5.93, with SD 4.94 and in post-test score was 7.8 with SD 0.34 and mothers was 17.6 with SD 1.90 both are significant.

Table 3: Effectiveness of knowledge among pre-schoolers and mothers mean, standard deviation, standard error of pre-test and post-test knowledge.

Parameters	Pre-schooler			Mothers		
Test	**Pre test**	**Post Test**	**Paired differences**	**Pre test**	**Post Test**	**Paired differences**
Mean	5.16	7.8	-2.70000	5.93	17.6	-
SD	1.84073	0.34874	1.82851	4.94	1.90	-
SEM	0.18407	0.03487	0.18285	0.49	0.54	-
Df	99			99		
T value	-14.766			-21.39		
P value	<0.0001			<0.0001		

A similar study was conducted by Rajeshree et al. The findings of the study revealed that the pre-test mean knowledge score was 11.75 with SD 4.20 and in post-test it 15.8 with SD 2.7 which is also significant.[9] Another study conducted by the Helmy et al wherein mothers' knowledge about child abuse was found to be average.[10] Mothers of fewer than five children were assessed in similar research by Brar to determine their knowledge on how to avoid child abuse. According to findings a minimum of 12 (12%) women with under-five children had high knowledge in preventing child abuse, while the majority of 50 (50%) moms with under-five children had average knowledge.[11] The results of the study carried out by Singh et al are relevant to the current study in terms of demographic characteristics, such as parental education level, family income, parental age, and family structure. Given that there is no statistically significant difference in the knowledge scores of urban and rural moms about child abuse, the mean knowledge score of rural and urban mothers is 8.960, with a t value of 4.977.[12]

Table 4: Association between pre-test knowledge of the study respondents with selected demographic variables.

Variable	Knowledge score		Chi-square	Df	P value	Result
	≤M	>M				
Pre-Schoolers						
Age (years)						
3	15	07				
4	14	20	4.05	2	0.13	NS
5	21	23				
Gender						
Male	13	23				
Female	37	27	4.34	1	0.03	S
Mothers						
Age (years)						
20-25	01	07				
25-30	12	07				
30-35	16	22	8.16	3	0.04	S
35-40	21	14				
Education of mothers						
Non-Formal	06	11				
Primary	19	16				
Secondary	11	12	2.13	3	0.14	NS
Graduates & Above	14	11				
Religion						
Hindu	37	34				
Muslims	10	12	0.45	2	0.79	NS
Christians	03	04				
No. of childrens						
1	11	08				
2	20	16	2.00	2	0.36	NS
3	19	26				
Type of family						
Nuclear	22	23				
Joint	20	10				
Extended	04	09	6.61	3	0.08	NS
Broken/Single Parent Family	04	08				
Occupation of Mothers						
Housewife	21	19				
Government job	06	07				
Private job	07	08	1.63	4	0.803	NS
Business	13	10				
Daly Wages	03	06				
Source of information						
Not heard	28	23				
Media	10	06				
Family	05	17	8.85	3	0.03	**S**
Friends	07	04				

S-Significant, NS-Non significant

Limitations

Limitations were study was confined to specific geographical area which imposes limits on generalization. The study was limited to a small sample, which impose limits in generalization. No control group was used in the research study which imposes threats to internal validity.

CONCLUSION

During preschool period children are in the stage of imitation and follows adults as they do. So it is believed that children will learn better things by play during this period. The findings of the study revealed that the knowledge of pre-schoolers and their mothers regarding prevention of child abuse was poor before implementation of Play and learn strategy programme. After

administration of the Play and learn strategy programme the knowledge level was excellent.

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