

Assessing the knowledge of mothers regarding selected behavioral disorders among children under five years of age

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ABSTRACT

Background: Among humans, first five years of life considered as a period of remarkable development and change, that includes all health dimensions such as behavioral, social, emotional and physical. Children's early behavioral development shows how they learn to react to others and circumstances. Persistent patterns of disruptive, inappropriate, or socially unacceptable conduct that impede regular functioning at home, at preschool, or in social situations are hallmarks of behavioral problems in young children. For parents, especially mothers must be able to understand such behavioral concerns in early childhood among children. Here five commons such concerns identified such as temper tantrums, thumb sucking, enuresis, nail biting and Pica. Hence, this study aimed to assess the knowledge of mothers regarding selected behavioral disorders among children under five years of age in selected areas of Ludhiana, Punjab.

Method: This was exploratory research design in which total 400 mothers of under-five children were recruited by using non-probability purposive sampling technique. The participants were selected based on inclusion and exclusion criteria from rural localities of Ludhiana district of Punjab. The informed consent was obtained from each participant. We developed structured knowledge questionnaire to assess the knowledge level of mothers of under-five regarding behavioral disorders. The developed tool was validated by experts and found reliable to implement. We used SPSS version-23 to analyzed the gathered data.

Results: Findings revealed that the maximum mothers were 28 to 29 years and 99.75% of mothers were not having previous knowledge about behavioral disorders. Further it was observed that max of mothers were having inadequate knowledge regarding temper tantrum (67%), thumb sucking (47.75%), enuresis (51.5%), nail biting (54.5%), and pica (70.25%). Whereas overall it was reflected that 233 (58.25%) mothers out of 400 were having inadequate knowledge regarding behavioral disorders among under-five children.

Conclusion: The study concluded that the mothers of under-five children were having inadequate knowledge regarding behavioral disorders such as temper tantrum, thumb sucking, enuresis, nail biting and pica. Based on these findings we are recommending to schedule either educational or an awareness intervention to mothers to make them understand about behavioral disorders among under-five children.

Keywords: behavioral disorders; mothers of under-five children; knowledge; temper tantrum; thumb sucking; nail biting; enuresis; pica.

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INTRODUCTION

The first five years of a child's life are considered the most sensitive and formative years of childhood and behaviour is a significant aspect of a child's overall

growth and development.(1) During these periods of rapid physical, emotional, social, cognitive and

behavioral change, children develop future personality and adjustment patterns. Children's behaviour are typically a reflection of their developmental requirements, feelings, interactions with their surroundings and coping skills.(2,3) Understanding of these behavioral patterns is important in the promotion

of healthy emotional and psychological development among under five youngsters.(4)

Behavioral disorders in children under the age of five have been a growing concern globally due to their effects on the child's emotional stability, social interactions, learning aptitude, and family environment.(5,6) Children in early childhood exhibit behaviour such as temper tantrums, thumb sucking, nail biting, bedwetting and pica. Many of these behaviour may be considered a natural part of development, but persistent or excessive manifestation may interfere with the child's healthy growth and daily functioning.(2,7,8) Such behavioral disorders may be the result of a mix of biological, psychological, environmental and social factors that affect the kid during the developing years. (9)

Temper tantrums are one of the most common behavioral disorders in young children, generally happening when youngsters are unable to express their emotions or frustrations appropriately. (10–12) Likewise, thumb sucking and nail biting are generally regarded self-soothing habits that bring comfort during times of stress, fear, insecurity, or boredom. (13–15) Bedwetting or enuresis may be caused to delayed bladder control or emotional difficulties, while pica is the recurrent ingestion of non-food material such as clay, chalk or paper and may be linked to developmental, nutritional or emotional reasons. (16–20) These behaviour are typical of early childhood, but a lack of understanding and inappropriate responses from carers can lead to negative emotional and behavioral results for the child.(21)

Mothers are primary carers and spend maximum time with the kid and thus play a significant role in observing, analyzing and regulating behavioral changes in children. (22) The understanding and attitudes of the kid towards behavioral problems greatly affect the child's emotional stability, behavioral adjustment and development. A mother with sufficient knowledge is more likely to detect behavioral problems early, react properly, and obtain advice or assistance in a timely manner when necessary. (23,24) On the other hand, misconceptions, cultural beliefs, lack of awareness and lack of access to credible information can result in perception of typical developmental behaviour as abnormal or unhealthy.

Research evidence shows that many mothers lack enough understanding regarding behavioral issues of under-five children especially about the causes, early indications, preventive measures and appropriate management options. (25) Many communities see behavioral problems such as temper tantrums, enuresis or nail biting as problems of stubbornness,

disobedience or poor parenting rather than developmental or emotional problems. Such misunderstandings might lead to harsh disciplinary methods, disregard of emotional needs or late intervention, which will impact the child's psychological well-being and healthy growth.(2)

In India, especially in community settings, greater focus has traditionally been placed on physical health, nutrition and immunization, whereas behavioral and emotional aspects of child health have received relatively less attention. Behavioral issues among young children are becoming more common although knowledge among mothers is low in many areas due to differences in education, socio-economic status, parenting style and availability of health education facilities. (12,26–28) Thus it is vital to measure the level of knowledge of mothers regarding the behavioral abnormalities among under five children so that relevant educational initiatives and awareness programmes may be established.

With increased concern over behavioral abnormalities in young children, and the critical role mothers play in early identification and therapy of these disorders, there is a great need to investigate mothers' knowledge about these diseases. Assessment of their comprehension will help to identify the knowledge gaps and offer a basis for the development of educational materials and supportive interventions to improve child behavioral health and to promote healthy developmental outcomes. Hence the present exploratory study was undertaken by investigator to assess the knowledge of mothers regarding selected behavioral disorders amongst children under five years of age in selected areas of Ludhiana, Punjab.

Objectives

To assess the knowledge of mothers regarding selected behavioral disorders among children under five years of age in selected areas of Ludhiana, Punjab.

Materials and Methods: Quantitative research with exploratory research design was adopted for the study. The study samples were identified based on eligibility criteria from identified areas of Ludhiana at Punjab. The non-probability purposive sampling technique were used to recruit the samples. And following eligibility criteria were chosen to select the samples in the study. the inclusion criteria stated that the mothers who are having children with age of less than five years, residing at rural area of Ludhiana, make them available for data collection, voluntarily providing their informed consent and must be able to read and write Punjabi or Hindi or English. Whereas mothers who's not a primary caregiver for under-five children, having

diagnosed with any psychiatric or neurological illness and health professionals were kept out from this study by adding up into exclusion criteria. The sample size calculated by statistical method (Power analysis by Cochran formula) used & reached to 400 samples to make maximum inferences. The research tools were prepared & identified. These tools kept in two sections, in which Section-I prepared to gather base-line information of samples, the section-II Structured Knowledge Questionnaire used to gather knowledge level information of samples. The Section-I introduced first to gather socio-demographic information & then validated scales were used to gather knowledge level

information. The gathered data were arranged in excel format as a master sheet. The gathered data was analyzed in SPSS-23 version.

Results and Discussion: Obtained information were analyzed and grouped as per objectives of the study. The result reflected in tabular and graphics form.

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Socio-Demographic Variables of mothers of under-five children:

N=400

Sr. No.	Socio-demographic Variable		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1.	Age of women	<25 Years	87	21.75
		26-27 Years	68	17
		28-29 Years	182	45.5
		>30 Years	63	15.75
2.	Religion	Hindu	191	47.75
		Muslim	34	8.5
		Christian	69	17.25
		Sikhs	106	26.5
3.	Educational Status	No Formal Education	03	0.75
		Primary	79	19.75
		Secondary	63	15.75
		12th	109	27.25
		Graduate	127	31.75
		>Graduate	19	4.75
4.	Occupation	Own business	08	2
		Government Job	94	23.5
		Private Job	181	45.25
		Housewife	117	29.25
5.	Monthly income in Rs.	<10000	06	1.5
		10000-30000	31	7.75
		30000-50000	97	24.25
		>50000	266	66.5
6.	Type of family	Joint family	167	41.75
		Nuclear family	233	58.25
7.	Place of residence	Urban area	278	69.5
		Rural area	122	30.5
8.	Number of children	One	164	41

		Two	193		48.25
		Three	43		10.75
9.	Previous knowledge about behavioral disorders	Yes	01		0.25
		No	399		99.75

The table reflected and revealed that the maximum number of mothers 45.5% belonged to the age group of 28–29 years, most mothers 47.75% were Hindu, the highest number of mothers 31.75% were graduates, the majority of mothers 45.25% were working in private jobs, the maximum number of respondents 66.5% reported a monthly income of more than ₹50,000, many mothers 58.25% belonged to nuclear families,

most mothers 69.5% were residing in urban areas, the highest proportion of mothers 48.25% had two children, and an overwhelming majority of mothers 99.75% reported having no previous knowledge.

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Socio-Demographic Variables of children of mothers of under-five children:

N=400

Sr. No.	Socio-demographic Variable		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1.	Child age	0-1 year	152	38
		1-3 years	87	21.75
		4-5 years	161	40.25
2.	Gender of child	Male	189	47.25
		Female	211	52.75
3.	Birth order of child	First	164	41
		Second	193	48.25
		Third	43	10.75

It reflected that the demographic variables of children whose mothers participated in this study. it divulged that maximum children 40.25% were aged in between 4 to 5 years, max of them 48.25% were female and

48.25% of children were having their birth order as second child.

Table:3 Frequency and percentage of knowledge level of mothers regarding selected behavioral disorders:

Behavioral Disorders/ Knowledge categories		Inadequate Knowledge	Average knowledge	Adequate knowledge
Temper Tantrum	Frequency	268	93	39
	Percentage	67.0	23.25	9.75
Thumb Sucking	Frequency	191	118	91
	Percentage	47.75	29.5	22.75
Enuresis	Frequency	206	147	47

	Percentage	51.5	36.75	11.75
Nail Biting	Frequency	218	113	69
	Percentage	54.5	28.25	17.25
Pica	Frequency	281	93	26
	Percentage	70.25	23.25	6.5
Overall	Frequency	233	113	54
	Percentage	58.25	28.25	13.5

As per the presented table, it was clearly observed that the knowledge score level of participants for each behavioral disorder and overall found maximum at inadequate knowledge category in which for overall selected behavioral disorder 58.25% of mothers has inadequate knowledge.

DISCUSSION

The study demonstrated that the maximum mothers of under-five children are having inadequate knowledge regarding selected behavioral disorders. A study by Umamaheswari V. found their result similar to present study and they stated that peak level of mothers were found with poor to moderate level of knowledge.(29) A study by Khera stated their finding in relation with similar finding of existing research like maximum number of respondent mothers were having average level of knowledge and very few were having excellent level of knowledge. Whether they stated that the mean with SD of knowledge levels of mothers are also like existing research, which is considered as strong favouring of existing findings.(30) A study by Babu also find similar level of knowledge among mothers regarding behavioural disorders, and stated that maximum mothers were having inadequate knowledge and very few found with excellent level of knowledge of mothers.(31) Another study by Xavier Simi also

found their findings similar to this study and revealed that highest mothers were having average to poor

knowledge level and very few were having good level of knowledge.(32)

Limitations of the study

- The research was confined to certain locales, perhaps limiting the generalizability of the results to other regions or people.
- The sample included just mothers of children under five; hence, the results are not applicable to dads or other carers.
- The research used a structured questionnaire for data collection, reliant on self-reported answers, which may be susceptible to response bias.
- Time limitations during data collection may have affected the thoroughness of participants' replies.
- The research only examined certain behavioral abnormalities and did not include all behavioral or developmental issues in children under five years of age.
- The participants' availability and comprehension during the administration of the questionnaire may have affected the precision of their replies.

Conclusion:

Based on study findings, we have concluded that the mothers of under-five children are having inadequate knowledge or understanding regarding children's behavioral disorders, which need a strong and effective intervention to focus, therefore, we recommend to develop information booklet in regard to addressing behavioral disorders among under-five children.

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