RESEARCH PAPER

A Descriptive Study to Assess the Level of Knowledge Regarding Child Abuse and Its Prevention Among Mothers Visting Pediatric OPD At AVMC&H Puducherry

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ABSTRACT

Child abuse is a significant global public health concern affecting children's physical, emotional and psychological well-being. Mothers play a crucial role in identifying and preventing abuse. This study aimed to assess the level of regarding child abuse and its preventing among mothers attending a pediatric outpatient Departments. A quantitative descriptive design was adopted among 60 mothers using convenient sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results revealed that 58.3% of mothers had moderately adequate knowledge,25%had inadequate knowledge, and 16.6% had adequate knowledge. A significant association was found between knowledge and educational status. The study concludes that educational interventions are necessary to improve mothers' awareness and prevent child abuse.

Keywords: Child abuse, Prevention, Mothers, Knowledge, Pediatric OPD, Awareness

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INTRODUCTION

Child abuse is critical issue that poses serious threats to the health and well-being of the children worldwide. It encompasses physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. These forms of abuse can have long-lasting consequences, including physical injuries, psychological trauma, developmental delays, and increased risk of chronic diseases in adulthood.

Globally, millions of children experience violence and abuse, often within their own homes. Despite the existence of legal frameworks and protective measures, child abuse remains underreported due to lack of awareness, cultural beliefs, and fear of social stigma. In developing countries like India, the problem further compounded by socio economic factors, lack of education and limited access to information.

Mothers, being the primary caregivers, are in a unique position to identify early sings of abuse and take preventive actions. However, their ability to do so depends largely on their knowledge and awareness. Understanding the level of knowledge among mothers is essential for designing effective educational interventions and preventive strategies.

This study aims to assess the level of knowledge regarding child abuse and its prevention among mothers visiting a paediatric OPD and to identify factors associated.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A quantitative research approach with a descriptive research design was used to assess the knowledge of mothers regarding child abuse and its prevention.

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the level of knowledge of mothers regarding child abuse.
2. To assess the level of knowledge of mothers regarding prevention of child abuse.
3. To find the association between the level of knowledge and selected demographic variables such as Age, Educational status, Occupation, Type of family, Number of children, previous knowledge about child abuse.

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4. To identify the areas where mothers lack adequate knowledge regarding child abuse and its prevention.

HYPOTHESIS

H1: There will be a significant association between the level of the knowledge regrading child abuse and its prevention among mothers and selected demographic variables.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Setting and Participants

The study was conducted in the pediatric OPD of a selected hospital. The participants included mothers who visited the OPD during the data collection period.

Sample size and sampling technique

A total number of 60 mothers were selected using a non-probability convenient sampling technique based on their availability and willingness to participate.

Inclusion Criteria

Mothers visiting paediatric OPD

Mothers with at least one child

Mothers willing to participate

Exclusion Criteria

Mothers who were not willing to participate

Mothers who were seriously ill

DATA COLLECTION TOOL

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of two sections:

Section A: Demographic variables

Section B: 30 knowledge-based questions

Each correct answer was awarded one mark. The total score was categorized into inadequate, moderate, and adequate knowledge.

Data Collection Procedure

Permission was obtained from hospital authorise. Informed consent was taken from participants. Data were collected through direct interaction using the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage) and inferential statistics (chi-square test).

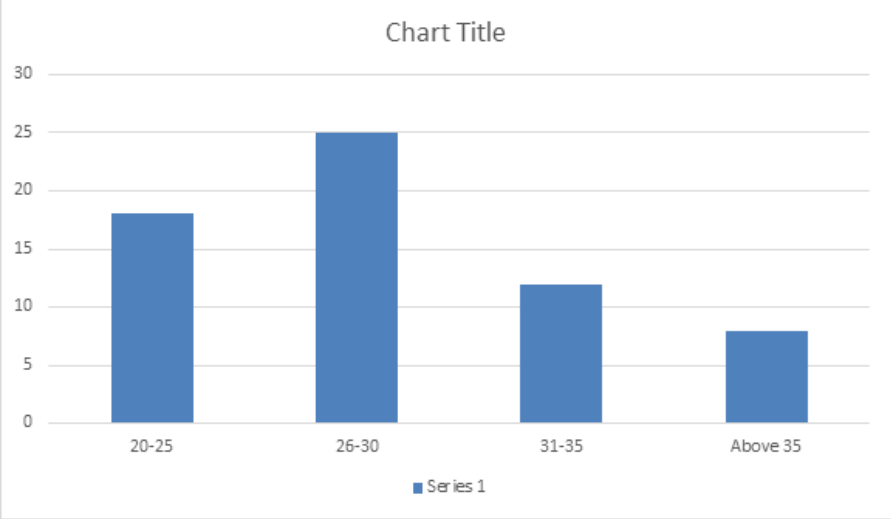
RESULT AND DISCUSSION

SECTION: 1 Distribution of demographic variables

Table 4.1: Distribution of mothers by age

Age Group (Years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20-25	18	30%
26-30	22	36%
31-35	12	30%
Above 35	8	13.3%
Total	60	100%

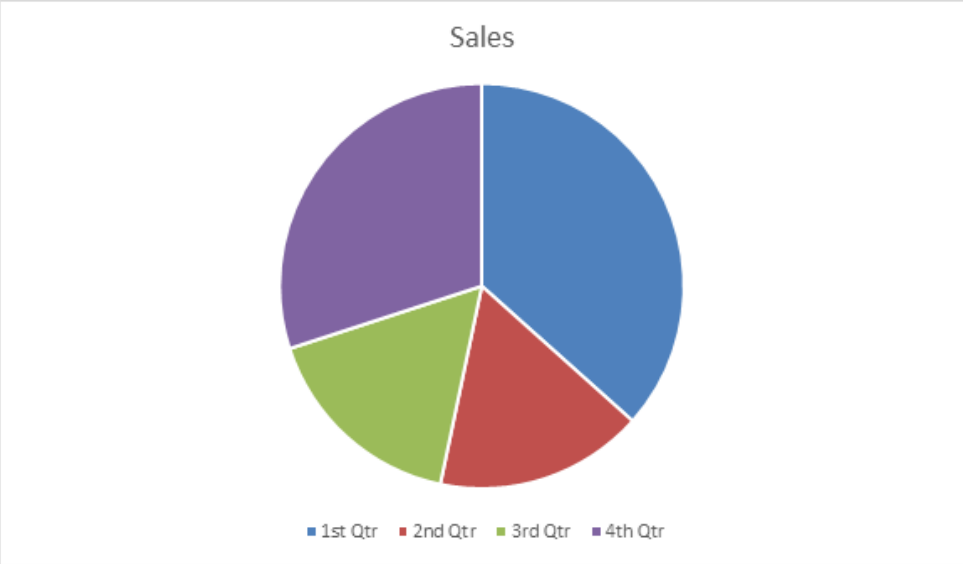
Interpretation:
The majority (36.6%) of mothers were in the group 26-30 years.



Distribution of mothers by education

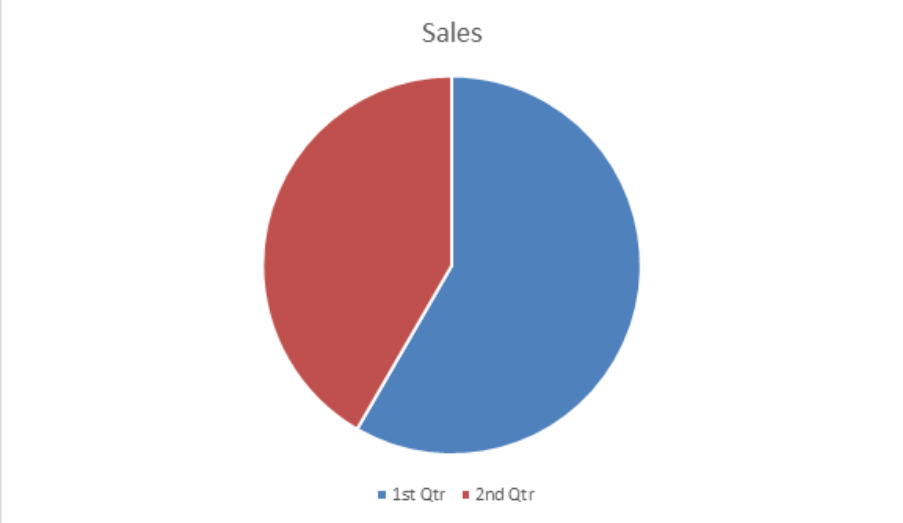
Educational level	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	10	16.6%
Secondary	22	36.6%

Higher secondary	18	30%
Graduate & above	10	16.6%
Total	60	100%



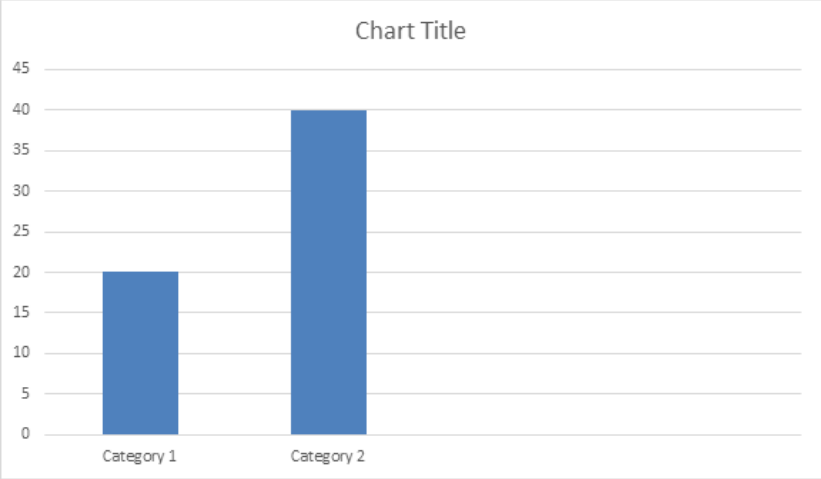
Distribution of mothers by occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Home maker	35	58.3%
Employed	25	41.6%
Total	60	100%



Distribution by family

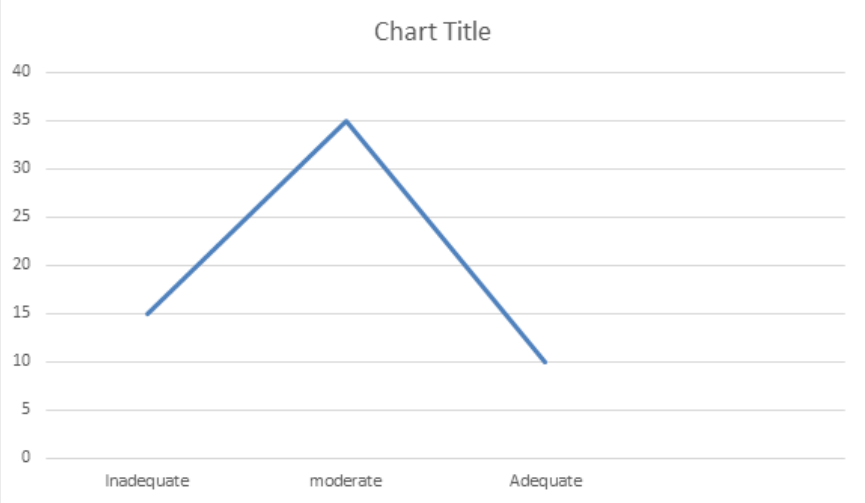
Family Type	Frequency	Percentage
Nuclear	38	63.3%
Joint	22	36.6%
Total	60	100%



SECTION B: LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE

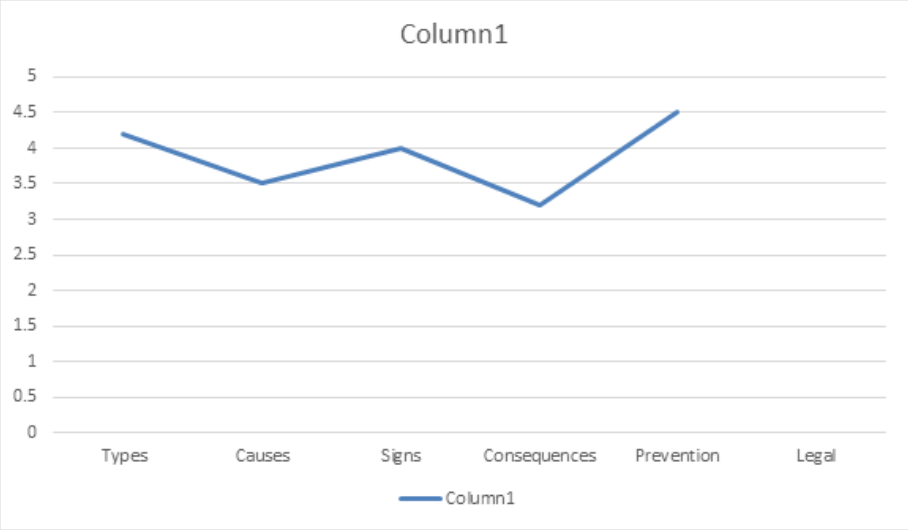
Overall knowledge

Knowledge level	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate	15	25%
Moderate	35	58.3%
Adequate	10	16.6%



SECTION C: Area-wise knowledge analysis

Content Area	Mean Score	Distribution
Types of Abuse	4.2	70%
Causes	3.5	58%
Signs & Symptoms	4.0	66%
Consequences	3.2	53%
Prevention	4.5	75%
Legal Aspects	2.8	46%



SUMMARY OF THE DATA ANALYSIS

- Majority of mothers were aged 26-30 years
- Most had secondary education
- Majority was homemaker
- Most mothers had no prior knowledge
- Best knowledge area is prevention
- Weakest area is Legal awareness
- Significant association found with education

The demographic data revealed that most mothers were aged between 26-30 years, had secondary education, and were homemakers. A majority belonged to nuclear families and lacked prior knowledge regarding child abuse.

Regarding knowledge levels, 58.3% of mothers had moderately adequate knowledge, 25% had inadequate knowledge, and 16.6% had adequate knowledge. This indicates that although some awareness exists, it is not sufficient for effective prevention.

Area wise analysis showed that knowledge was higher in preventive aspects and lower in legal awareness and identification of abuse. Many mothers were unaware of child protection laws and reporting procedures.

Statistical analysis revealed a significant association between knowledge level and educational status, indicating that education plays a key role in awareness. No significant association was found with age or family type.

DISSCUSION

The findings of the study indicates that the majority of mothers possess moderate knowledge regarding child abuse, which is consistent with previous studies conducted in similar settings. The lack of adequate knowledge among a significant proportion of mothers highlights the need for targeted educational interventions.

The higher knowledge in preventive aspects suggest that mothers are somewhat aware of general safety measures but lack detailed understanding of specific preventive and early identification od abuse.

The significant association between education and knowledge emphasizes the importance of educational status in shaping awareness. Educated mothers are more likely to assess information and understand child protection measures.

Healthcare professionals, especially nurses, can play a vital role in educating mothers during hospital visit. Paediatric OPD provide an excellent opportunity for health education and awareness programs.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that mothers have moderate knowledge regarding child abuse and its prevention, with notable gaps in legal awareness and identification of abuse. There is a need for structured educational programs to improve knowledge and promote child safety.

RECOMMENTATIONS

- Conducted awareness programmes for mothers
- Provide educational materials
- Strengthen health education in OPDs
- Conduct further research with larger samples

ACKNOELEDGEMENT

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Conflict of Interest

None declared

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