



Research Article

A STUDY TO ASSESS THE LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE REGARDING EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF LEARNING DISABILITIES, AMONG MOTHERS OF UNDER FIVE YEAR OLD CHILDREN, IN SELECTED ANGANWADIES OF KIDANGOOR GRAMAPANCHAYTH, WITH A VIEW TO DEVELOP AN INFORMATION PAMPHLET

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ABSTRACT

Learning disabilities (LD) are defined as a childhood disorder, characterized by difficulty with certain skills such as reading or writing in individuals with normal intelligence. In India, its incidence is increasing at an alarming proportion, most of the individuals progress into serious cases. Perhaps, if the parents have enough knowledge it would be much easier for them to identify the manifestations at the very first occurrence and tackle the problem. This study aims to assess the level of knowledge of mothers with under five year olds regarding early identification of learning disabilities. A descriptive survey design was applied with a structured knowledge questionnaire along with a self-assessment tool for the identification of existence of risk factors of learning disabilities. The sample consisted of 30 mothers selected using a convenient sampling technique. Data revealed that among the 30 samples, 20 samples (66.6%) had average knowledge and 10 samples (33.3%) had good knowledge regarding early identification of learning disabilities. Hence, the study was concluded with result that, the mothers had an average knowledge regarding early identification of learning disabilities. The mean level of knowledge score obtained was 14.3. There was no significant association between the knowledge level of mothers and the selected demographic variables.

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INTRODUCTION

Learning is the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. The nature of children during their early years of development is that, they acquire spoken language first and then to speak.^[1] Occurrence of any discrepancy in the ability and performance of the actual process of learning is characterized as a learning disability.^[2] Individuals with specific childhood learning disorders face numerous challenges that persist throughout their lifetime. Different types of learning disabilities are seen among children. Apart from the usual types, various overlapping forms of learning disabilities are also apparent in people manifesting single and isolated learning discrepancy that has comparatively less impact on their lives. The treatment modes adapted for rectifying this disorder may vary depending on the type and severity of the disability.

Nursing as a family-oriented profession involves the crucial role of supporting and educating the parents of the children affected with these disorders.

Need for the Study

Learning disability is a genetic term that refers to a heterogeneous group of neurobehavioral disorder manifested by significant unexpected specific and assistant difficulties in acquisition and use of efficient reading (Dyslexia), writing (Dysgraphia) or mathematical (Dyscalculia) skills. Parents are the primary caregivers in the life of every child, if attention given it would be easier for them to identify the early signs of learning disabilities at the very young age. This immensely helps to render the essential care in order to prevent future progression. The incidence of learning disabilities among primary school students in India lies between 2-18%. The result of a study conducted to assess the level of knowledge of the mothers regarding learning disabilities had revealed that the mothers have a below average level of knowledge regarding learning disabilities.^[3]

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Problem Statement

A study to assess the level of knowledge regarding early identification of learning disabilities among mothers of Under five year old children in selected Anganwadies of Kidangoor Gramapanchayath with a view to develop an Informational pamphlet.

Objectives

1. To assess the knowledge regarding early identification of learning disabilities among mothers of under-five children.
2. To assess the learning disability among children of selected mothers.
3. To find the association between level of knowledge and selected demographic variables.
4. To develop an informational pamphlet regarding early detection and identification of learning disabilities in children.

Operational Definitions

Knowledge

In this study, 'knowledge' refers to the awareness regarding causes, clinical manifestations, management and prevention of learning disability among the mothers of under-five children. The knowledge was assessed by means of a Structured Knowledge Questionnaire.

Learning Disability

Learning disabilities is a discrepancy between actual achievements and expected achievements based on person's age and intellectual ability. In this study, the knowledge regarding early identification of learning disability among under-five children is assessed.

Mothers

In this study 'mother' refers to a women, who have children between 3-5 years of age, availing Anganwadi services from Kidangoor Gramapanchayat.

Under-Five Children

In this study, selected Anganwadies refers to two or three Anganwadies conveniently chosen to collect names and addresses of mothers to prepare sampling frame and meet mothers at their door step.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no association between knowledge level of mothers of under-five children regarding early detection and identification of learning disabilities among selected demographic variables.

H₁: There is an association between knowledge level of mothers of under-five children regarding early detection and identification of learning disabilities among selected demographic variables.

Assumptions

- The mothers may have basic knowledge regarding early identification of learning disabilities.
- The knowledge regarding early identification of

learning disability and associated risk factors would help the mothers to improve the learning abilities of their child.

Delimitations

- The study involves only 30 samples.
- The study is limited only to mothers of under-five children of selected Anganwadies of Kidangoor Gramapanchayat.
- Application of convenient sampling limits the generalization of findings.

Review of Literature

A Descriptive study was conducted to assess the knowledge of parents regarding childhood specific learning disability. A study was conducted at the selected hospitals at Manglore among parents within the age group 20 to 50 using a structured questionnaire, and convenient sampling was used to select the sample. The results have shown that about 40% parents who had undergone the study, had good knowledge regarding learning disability.^[4]

A Descriptive study was conducted to assess the knowledge regarding Learning disability in Siddhartha Layout, Mysore using a Self-administered structured questionnaire from 60 mothers. The results have shown that among the total samples, majority of the mothers precisely 70% had inadequate knowledge and there was a significant association between the demographic variables with the level of knowledge, where the P value was less than the level of significance 0.05 (P<0.05).^[3] A study was carried out to assess the level of knowledge regarding learning disabilities and their coping strategies. It was conducted among six Iranian mothers of children diagnosed with disabilities in Tehran. The results have revealed that the mothers lacked knowledge on how to care for a child with specific learning disabilities and how to make use of coping strategies.^[5]

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The research design selected for the current study is non-experimental descriptive research design.

Setting of the study

The study was conducted at four selected Anganwadies of Kidangoor Gramapanchayat.

Population

Population selected for this study were the mothers of under-five children, from four selected Anganwadies of Kidangoor Gramapanchayat.

Sample size

The study sample consists of 30 mothers of under-five children selected from four different Anganwadies of Kidangoor Gramapanchayath.

Sampling technique

The sampling technique selected for the current study was convenient sampling technique.

Criteria for sample selection

Inclusion Criteria

The following are the various inclusion criterions used in the present study.

Mothers

- bearing under-five children ascribed with anganwadi Services.
- who are interested to participate in the research study.

Exclusion Criteria

Following are the various exclusion criterions utilized for the present study.

Mothers

- whose children are above five years of age.
- who are working and will not be available during the process of data collection.
- who are mentally or physically challenged.
- who does not utilize Anganwadi services.
- who are not interested in this research study

Tool

The instruments used for data collection includes the following:

Tool 1: Structured knowledge questionnaire.

It is divided into two sections A and B. Section A comprised of 6 questions regarding Demographic Variables, Section B consisted of 20 questions solely devoted for assessing the level of knowledge among the selected samples.

Section A: Demographic Variables.

Section B: Structured knowledge questionnaire, regarding early detection of learning disability.

Tool 2: A Self-assessment tool for early detection of learning disabilities.

It included 10 questions, particularly focusing on the various developmental milestones of children of the selected samples.

Score interpretation

Based on the score obtained the samples were graded into three categories:

- Poor = 0 – 6.
- Average = 7 – 13.
- Good = 14 – 20.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Demographic variables of the sample population

This section describes the distribution of sample according to their baseline variables such as age, education, occupation, family, family history and complications during pregnancy. The data is summarized as, respective frequencies and percentages in the following Table 1.

Table 1 Tabulated representation of percentage and frequency distribution of sample population according to demographic data. N=30

Sl. No.	Demographic Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age			
1.	Between 20 and 25 years	2	6.66%
	Between 26 and 30 years	11	36.6%
	Between 31 and 35 years	9	30%
	Between 36 and 40 years	8	26.6%
Educational Qualification			
2.	Degree	17	56.6%
	High School	12	40%
	Primary School	1	3.33%
	Illiterate	0	0%
Occupational Status			
3.	Housewives	18	60%
	Self-employed	2	6.6%
	Professional	10	33.3%
Type of Family			
4.	Nuclear Family	17	56.6%
	Joint Family	13	43.3%
Family History of Learning Disabilities			
5.	Yes	0	0%
	No	30	100%
Complications during pregnancy			
6.	Yes	4	13.3%
	No	26	86.6%

Findings related to the knowledge of mothers on learning disabilities among under-five children

This section deals with analysis and interpretation of knowledge of learning disabilities. Knowledge was assessed with the help of a structural knowledge questionnaire containing 20 questions. Each correct answer carries one mark. It is depicted in the following table 2

Table 2 Percentage distribution of knowledge score of samples regarding Learning disabilities

Knowledge score	Grade	Frequency	Percentage of sample
0 - 6	Poor	0	0%
7 - 13	Average	20	66.6%
14 - 20	Good	10	33.3%

Data shows that among the 30 samples, 20 samples (66.6%) were having average knowledge and 10 samples (33.3%) had a good knowledge regarding early identification of learning disabilities.

Findings Obtained from the self-assessment tool for the early detection of learning disabilities

This section, deals with the interpretation of the findings obtained from the self assessment tool provided to the samples to rule out the prevalence of the risk factors of learning disabilities, among the children of the selected samples. The data is summarized in table 3

Table 3 Percentage and Frequency distribution of the findings acquired from the self assessment tool for the early detection of Learning disabilities

Sl. No.	Variables	Normal age of achievement	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Head control				
1.	a. 2 Months	3 rd months	0	0%
	b. 3 Months		10	33.3%
	c. 4 Months		4	13.3%
	d. 5 Months		16	53.3%
Steady standing				
2.	a. 5 Months	10 th month	1	3.33%
	b. 10 Months		19	63.33%
	c. 15 Months		10	33.33%
	d. 20 Months		0	0%
Calling "Amma"				
3.	a) 6 Months	8 th month	9	30%
	b) 7 Months		5	16.6%
	c) 8 Months		10	33.33%
	d) 12 Months		6	20%
Duration of Breast Feec				
4.	a) Less than 6 Months	Less than 6 months	5	16.6%
	b) 6 to 7 Months		6	20%
	c) 6 to 9 Months		1	3.33%
	d) 9 to 12 Months		18	60%
Started sitting without support				
5.	a. 6 Months	6 th month	4	13.3%
	b. 7 Months		5	16.6%
	c. 8 Months		14	46.67%
	d. 9 Months		7	23.3%
Started Walking				
6.	a. 11 Months	12 th month	7	23.3%
	b. 12 Months		8	26.6%
	c. 13 Months		7	23.3%
	d. 14 Months		8	26.67%
Started Speaking				
7.	a. 2 Years	2 Years	26	86.67%
	b. 2.5 Years		2	6.67%
	c. 3 Years		1	3.33%
	d. 3.5 Years		1	3.33%
Turned Over				
8.	a. 1 Month	5 Months	1	3.33%
	b. 2 Month		3	10%
	c. 3 Month		5	16.6%
	d. 5 Month		21	70%
Social Smiling				
9.	a. 1 Month	3 Months	6	20%
	b. 2 Month		12	40%
	c. 3 Month		12	40%
	d. 4 Month		0	0%
Eating and Drinking alone				
10.	a. 1.5 Years	1.5 Years	10	33.3%
	b. 2 Years		10	33.3%
	c. 2.5 Years		7	23.3%
	d. 3 Years		3	10%

Association between level of knowledge and selected demographic variables

This section describes the association between the knowledge of samples regarding early detection of Learning disabilities and demographic variables .Chi-square value was computed to find out the association between the knowledge of samples regarding the early detection of Learning disabilities and demographic variables. The data is summarized as, in the following Table 4.

Table 4 Chi-square value computed between the knowledge of women regarding the early detection of Learning disabilities and their respective demographic variables.

Sl. No.	Selected Demographic Variables	χ^2	Degree of freedom (df)	Table value	Significance	Inference
1.	Age	4.53	6	12.59	Non Significant	Null hypothesis accepted
2.	Education	10.953	6	12.59	Non Significant	Null hypothesis accepted
3.	Occupation	1.184	4	9.49	Non Significant	Null hypothesis accepted
4.	Complications during pregnancy	2.237	2	5.99	Non Significant	Null hypothesis accepted

DISCUSSION

The findings from the present study shows that among the total 30 mothers, 66.6% of the mothers were having average knowledge and 33.3% of the mothers had a good knowledge regarding the early detection and identification of learning disabilities. The acquired mean level of knowledge score was 14.3. The above mentioned results when taken for a comparison to a phenomenological study conducted to assess the lived experience of six Iranian mothers of children with learning disabilities in Tehran, it portrays that mothers lacked knowledge as to how to care a child and how to make use of coping strategies as well as they do not have enough knowledge for creating a positive caring relationship between family and child.^[5]

The present study findings shows that the computed chi-square values for age, education, occupation, type of the family, family history of learning disability and complications during pregnancy are not significant at 0.05 level of significance (P>0.05). Thus, pointing towards the fact that, there is no significant association between knowledge level of mothers of under-five children, regarding early detection and identification of learning disabilities among the selected demographic variables. These findings contradicts the results of a descriptive study conducted to assess the knowledge regarding learning disabilities in Siddhartha Layout, Mysore^[3].The results revealed that, 70% of mothers who took part in the study, had inadequate knowledge and there was a significant association between the selected demographic variables such as religion, education, occupation and type of delivery with the level of knowledge (P<0.05).

RESULTS

- The results obtained with differential and inferential statistics revealed that among the total of 30 mothers, 66.6% of them had average knowledge and 33.3% of them had good knowledge.
- The mean level of knowledge score was 14.3.
- Based on the data obtained from the self-assessment tool, none of the children of the selected mothers was found to be at risk factors of learning disabilities.
- There was no significant association between the level of knowledge of samples and selected demographic variables.

CONCLUSION

As per the results obtained from the current study the following conclusions were drawn, Among the total number of samples participated, 66.6% had average knowledge and 33.3% had good knowledge regarding the early identification of learning disabilities. None of the samples appeared to have poor knowledge regarding learning disabilities. None of the children of the selected samples were found to be prone to any existing risk factors of learning disabilities.

The level of knowledge of the samples pertaining to learning disabilities based on the selected demographic variables, shows no significant association between knowledge level and selected demographic variables ($P>0.05$).

Nursing Implications

Nurses are key healthcare professionals in every health care setting. It is important for a nurse to have proper knowledge regarding learning disabilities to take prompt actions for each call.

Nursing Education

- The research content adds better knowledge to expand the body of professional knowledge in nursing which can be included in the curriculum of nursing studies.
- Nursing educators should take initiatives to organize in-service education programmes for nursing students with the co-operation of Anganwady workers and ASHA workers associated with learning disabilities.

Nursing Administration

Mass awareness programmes can be conducted at the hospital level, as well as at the community level related to learning disabilities.

Nursing Practice

Nurses with ample knowledge and information about recent advancements, could apply evidence based practices and improvise their body of knowledge during patient care as well in the identification of required care.

Nursing Research

- A long term study on learning disabilities can be replicated regularly in all Anganwadies, with maximum participation of samples.
- Experimental and interventional studies can be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching programmes on learning disabilities.

Recommendations

- A similar study can be conducted with large samples, so that findings can be generalized.
- A similar study can be replicated among mothers having children diagnosed with learning disability.
- A planned teaching programme can be conducted, on particular aspects of learning disabilities.

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