

Awareness And Practices Regarding Prevention Of Child Abuse Among Mothers Of School Children

Sethu Lakshmi C S¹, Dr. Deepa P²

Lecturer, Child Health Nursing, Theophilus College Of Nursing, Kangazha, KUHS/ University, India)

Associate Professor Child Health Nursing, Government College Of Nursing, Kottayam, KUHS, Kerala, India)

Abstract:

The present study was intended to assess the awareness and practices regarding prevention of child abuse among mothers of school children. The objectives of the study were to assess awareness of mothers regarding prevention of child abuse, to assess practices of mothers regarding prevention of child abuse, and to determine the association of awareness and practices regarding prevention of child abuse with selected socio personal variables. The conceptual framework was based on Nola J Pender's Health Promotion model. Research design adopted was cross sectional design. Sample consisted of 170 mothers of school children attending out patient department of Pediatric Medicine, Government T.D Medical College Hospital, Alappuzha. Socio personal data sheet, Questionnaire to assess awareness of mothers regarding prevention of child abuse and checklist to assess the practices of mothers regarding prevention of child abuse were completed by self-report from the mothers of school children. The study findings showed that 11.2% of mothers had good awareness regarding prevention of child abuse and 11.2% of mothers had poor awareness. Awareness of mothers regarding the prevention of child abuse had a mean score of 13.98 with standard deviation 2.85. The study findings showed that 30% of mothers had good practices regarding prevention of child abuse and none of mothers had poor practices. There was significant association between awareness of mothers regarding prevention of child abuse and education of mothers. But there was no significant association between awareness of mothers regarding prevention of child abuse and other socio personal variables. There was no significant association between practices of mothers regarding prevention of child abuse and socio personal variables.

Background: According to WHO, nearly 3 in 4 children or 300 million children aged 2–4 years regularly suffer physical punishment and/or psychological violence at the hands of parents and caregivers. One in 5 women and 1 in 13 men reported being sexually abused as a child. It is estimated that 120 million girls and young women under 20 years of age have suffered some form of forced sexual contact.¹ India has approximately 440 million children, accounting for more than 40% of the population. The Ministry of Women and Child Development of Government of India conducted a survey in 2007 which showed that the prevalence of all forms of child abuse is extremely high; the prevalence of physical abuse was 69%, sexual abuse was 53%, and in case of emotional abuse every second child reported facing emotional abuse and in 83% of cases parents were the abusers. Children between 5 to 12 years are at highest risk for abuse and exploitation.²

Materials and Methods. The cross-sectional study was conducted among mothers of school children aged 6 to 12 years attending the Pediatric Medicine OPD of Government T.D Medical College Hospital, Alappuzha. Mothers were selected consecutively. The tools used in the study were socio personal data sheet, questionnaire to assess awareness of mothers regarding prevention of child abuse, and checklist to assess the practices of mothers regarding prevention of child abuse.

Results: The study findings showed that 11.2% of mothers had good awareness regarding prevention of child abuse and 11.2% of mothers had poor awareness. The study findings showed that majority (70%) of mothers had fair practices regarding prevention of child abuse and none of mothers had poor practices. There was significant association between awareness of mothers regarding prevention of child abuse and education of mothers. But there was no significant association between awareness of mothers regarding prevention of child abuse and other socio personal variables. There was no significant association between practices of mothers regarding prevention of child abuse and socio personal variables.

Conclusion: The researchers concluded that the mothers should be educated regarding the general information regarding child abuse, physical and emotional abuse. They should be empowered regarding the practices that they should follow in order to prevent abuse of their children.

Key Word: Awareness, Practices, Prevention of child abuse, Mothers of school children

Date of Submission: 28-12-2024

Date of Acceptance: 08-01-2025

I. Introduction

Violence against children includes all forms of violence against individuals under 18 years old, whether perpetrated by parents or other caregivers, peers, romantic partners, or strangers. Globally, it is estimated that up to 1 billion children aged 2–17 years, have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence or neglect in the past year. Experiencing violence in childhood impacts lifelong health and well-being. Evidence from around the world shows that violence against children can be prevented.³

According to WHO, nearly 3 in 4 children or 300 million children aged 2–4 years regularly suffer physical punishment and/or psychological violence at the hands of parents and caregivers. One in 5 women and 1 in 13 men report having been sexually abused as a child. It is estimated that 120 million girls and young women under 20 years of age have suffered some form of forced sexual contact.¹

II. Material And Methods

The investigator adopted quantitative approach for the study since the primary objective of the study was to assess the awareness and practices regarding prevention of child abuse among mothers of school children.

Study Design: Research design of this study was cross sectional design.

Study Location: The study was conducted in the out patient department of Pediatric Medicine, Government T.D Medical College Hospital, Alappuzha.

Study Duration: 27/07/2023 to 09/09/2023

Sample size: 170 mothers of school children.

Sample size calculation: A study conducted by T. Sujatha et al in Maraimalai Nagar (Tamilnadu) showed that 38% of mothers of school children had inadequate knowledge regarding child abuse.⁴

Sample size was calculated by the formula $4pq/d^2$

The sample size was calculated as 163 which was rounded off to 170.

Subjects & selection method:

Inclusion criteria:

Mothers of school children:

1. who are willing to participate in the study
2. who are living in the same household with the child
3. who can read and write Malayalam

Exclusion criteria:

1. Mothers of children who are critically ill

Procedure methodology

Formal permissions for data collection were obtained from Scientific Review Committee, Institutional Human Ethics Committee, Government College of Nursing, Alappuzha, Medical Superintendent and Head of Department of Pediatric Medicine, Government T.D Medical College Hospital, Alappuzha and Kerala University of Health Sciences, Thrissur. Data were collected for a period of 6 weeks from 27/07/2023- 09/09/2023. The mothers of school children who were attending OPD of Pediatric Medicine department were selected consecutively. The purpose of study was explained to them and the participant information sheet was given to the mothers. Informed consent was obtained from mothers. The mothers were seated comfortably on a chair in a room in OPD. The socio personal data of mothers were collected by administering the socio personal data sheet. Then checklist to assess the practices regarding prevention of child abuse were administered to mothers. After that questionnaire to assess awareness regarding prevention of child abuse was administered. The total duration of data collection for each mother was 30 minutes. The collected data were entered into an Excel sheet for further analysis. Data were analysed by suitable statistical package. Based on awareness and practices of mothers a brochure was prepared by the researcher. It was made available to all mothers of school children attending the Pediatric medicine OPD.

Statistical analysis

Data was analyzed using SPSS version 20 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL). Socio personal data were analyzed using frequencies and percentage. Awareness of mothers were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation. Practices were analyzed using frequencies, percentage, mean and standard deviation.

Association of awareness and practices regarding prevention of child abuse among mothers with selected socio personal variables were analyzed by using Chi square test.

III. Results

Table no 1: Frequency distribution and percentage of mothers based on age, education and type of family

Age (in years)	f	%
18-25	2	1.2
26-33	92	54.1
34-41	65	38.2
42-49	10	5.9
50-57	1	0.6
Education of mothers	f	%
Professional degree	18	10.6
Graduate	38	22.4
Intermediate/ Diploma	51	30.0
High School	63	37
Type of family	f	%
Nuclear family	101	59.4
Joint family	69	40.6

Table 1 illustrates that 54.1% of mothers of school children belonged to the age group of 26-33 years, 37 % of mothers had high school education and 59.4% of mothers belong to nuclear family.

Table no 2: Frequency distribution and percentage of mothers based on occupation and monthly family income

Occupation of mother	f	%
Professional	21	12.4
Semi professional	10	5.9
Clerical/shop/farm	8	4.7
Skilled worker	5	2.9
Semi skilled worker	1	0.6
Unskilled worker	10	5.9
Unemployed	115	67.6
Monthly family income (in Rs)	f	%
61663-123321	6	3.5
46129-61662	8	4.7
30831-46128	14	8.2
18497-30830	40	23.5
6175-18496	60	35.4
≤6174	42	24.7

Table 2 shows that 67.6% of mothers were unemployed and 35.4% of mothers belonged to families which had a monthly family income of Rs 6175-18496.

Figure no 1: Percentage distribution of mothers based on awareness regarding the prevention of child abuse.

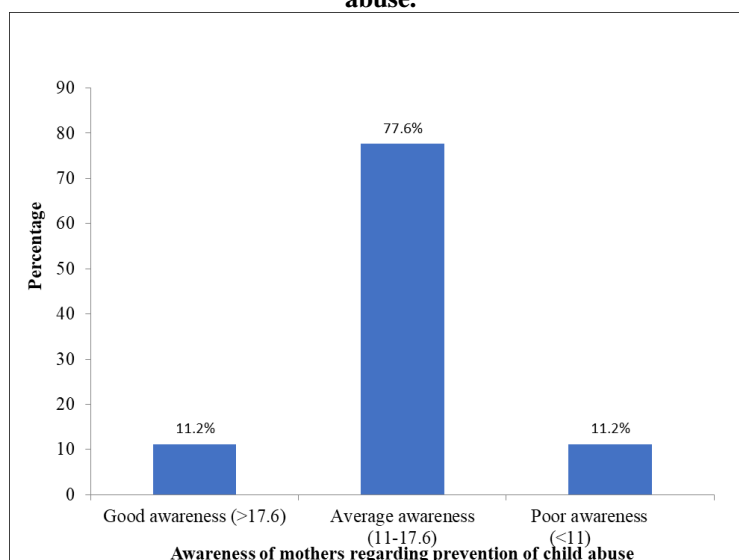


Figure 1 reveals that 11.2% of mothers had good awareness regarding prevention of child abuse and 11.2% had poor awareness.

Table no 3: Mean and standard deviation of awareness regarding prevention of child abuse among mothers of school children.

Awareness	Mean	Mean%	SD	Minimum	Maximum
	13.98	63.54	2.85	7	20

The table 3 depicts that awareness of mothers regarding prevention of child abuse had a mean score of 13.98 with standard deviation 2.85.

The awareness regarding child abuse in different domains of general information, physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse were also assessed.

Table no 4: Mean and standard deviation of awareness regarding prevention of child abuse in different domains.

Domains of awareness regarding child abuse	Mean	Mean%	SD	Minimum	Maximum
General information	4.14	51.75	1.54	0	7
Physical abuse	2.56	64	0.84	1	4
Sexual abuse	5.23	74.71	1.31	1	7
Emotional abuse	2.04	68	0.514	1	3

Table 4 reveals that the mean score of awareness regarding sexual abuse was 5.23 with a standard deviation of 1.31. It is also seen that the mean percentage was highest regarding sexual abuse (74.71%) and lowest regarding the general information (51.75%).

Figure no 2: Percentage distribution of mothers based on practices regarding prevention of child abuse

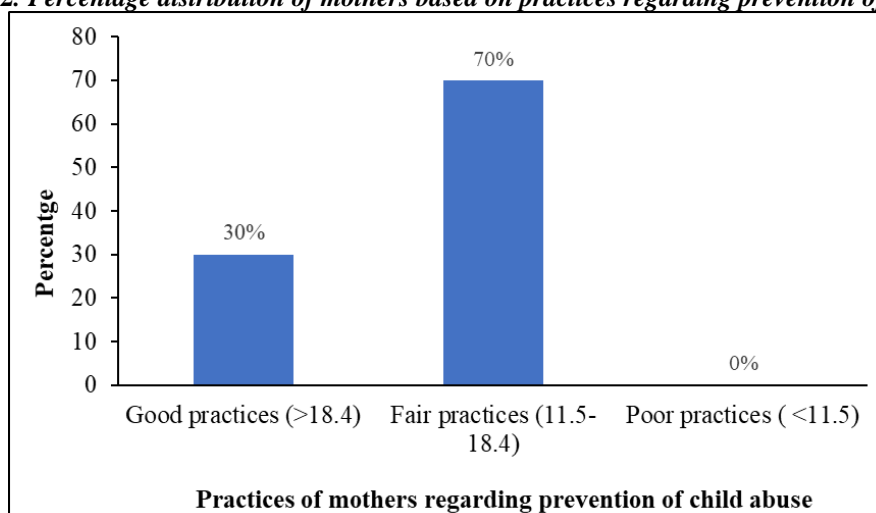


Figure 2 indicates that 18.4% of mothers had good practices regarding the prevention of child abuse and none of the mothers had poor practices.

Table no 5: Mean and standard deviation of practices regarding prevention of child abuse among mothers of school children

Practice	Mean	Mean %	SD	Minimum	Maximum
	17.71	77	1.94	12	22

The table 5 reveals that practices of mothers regarding prevention of child abuse had a mean score of 17.71 with standard deviation 1.94.

IV. Discussion

The study identified that 11.2% of the mothers had poor awareness regarding the prevention of child abuse. A study to assess the knowledge regarding child abuse among mothers in selected residential areas of Delhi-NCR showed that 3% of mothers had poor knowledge regarding child abuse⁵. A study to assess the level of knowledge regarding the prevention of child abuse among mothers in selected rural areas of Haryana revealed

that 37% of mothers had inadequate knowledge regarding the prevention of child abuse⁶. Another study conducted in rural areas of Western Rajasthan showed that 22.6% of mothers had poor knowledge⁷. A study conducted in West Bengal regarding the assessment of knowledge regarding child abuse and its prevention among mothers revealed that 30% of mothers had poor knowledge regarding child abuse and its prevention⁸. All these findings were incongruent with the present study findings.

In this study 70% of mothers had fair practices regarding the prevention of child abuse and none of the mothers had poor practices. A study conducted in the Kanchipuram district to assess knowledge, attitude, and practices regarding the prevention of juvenile sexual abuse showed that 75.6% of mothers had adequate practices and none of the mothers had poor practices⁹. The findings were consistent with the present study. A cross-sectional survey in Thiruvananthapuram regarding child disciplining practices among mothers revealed that 62% of mothers used severe verbal discipline and 50% of mothers used severe physical abuse¹⁰. The study findings indicated poor practices regarding child abuse. This study findings were incongruent with the present study. A descriptive cross-sectional study done among mothers who have children over six years of age, attending the department of pediatrics in a tertiary hospital in the outskirts of Trivandrum district revealed that 10.8% of mothers had no practices regarding child sexual abuse prevention¹¹. The study findings were inconsistent with the present study. A study conducted in Tanzania regarding knowledge, attitudes, and practices of parents on child sexual abuse and its prevention revealed that 72.7% of mothers had poor performance regarding practices for the prevention of child sexual abuse¹². This study finding was also incongruent with the present study.

The study findings revealed that there was a significant association between the awareness of mothers regarding the prevention of child abuse and the education of mothers. A study conducted in Maraimalai Nagar, Tamilnadu revealed that there was a significant association between the knowledge of mothers regarding child abuse and education of mothers⁴. A study was conducted in Bathinda (Punjab) to assess the knowledge of mothers with school-age children regarding child abuse and its prevention also revealed that the educational status of mothers was associated with the level of knowledge regarding child abuse and its prevention¹³. Both the study findings were congruent with the present study findings. A study conducted in Coimbatore to assess the knowledge regarding child abuse among mothers revealed that there was no significant association between the level of knowledge and the educational status of mothers¹⁴. Another descriptive study to assess the knowledge regarding child abuse and its prevention among mothers from selected urban areas of Pune city revealed that there was no significant association between knowledge level and the educational status of mothers⁶. Both the study findings were incongruent with the present study findings.

The present study findings revealed that there was no significant association between the awareness of mothers regarding the prevention of child abuse and socio-personal variables other than the educational status of mothers. A study conducted in Punjab to assess the knowledge regarding child abuse among mothers revealed that there was a significant association between knowledge of child abuse and the selected demographic variables such as age of mothers, educational status, family type and occupation among mothers¹⁵. The study findings were incongruent with the present study findings.

The present study findings revealed that there was no significant association between the practices of mothers regarding the prevention of child abuse and socio-personal variables. A study conducted in Sivakasi to assess the level of knowledge and expressed practices regarding prevention of child abuse among mothers revealed that there were no significant association between expressed practices and demographic variables.¹⁶ The study findings were consistent with the present study.

V. Conclusion

Today's children are the ones who determine tomorrow's future. It is the responsibility of their parents and society to raise them as safe as possible for their good future. Unfortunately, today's children are not even safe under their parents' wings. Sometimes knowingly or unknowingly parents become child abusers. Creating awareness regarding prevention of child abuse among the parents of school children is a crucial point as far as health care personnel are concerned. Although, none of the mothers of school children had poor practices regarding child abuse prevention, they need to be educated regarding the general information and physical abuse. The pediatric nurses should design and implement innovative strategies to educate the mothers of school children in various settings. It will ultimately help in the optimal development of the children.

References

- [1] Department Of Women And Child Development, Government Of Kerala Child Maltreatment. World Health Organization;2020. Available From:-[Http://www.who.int/home/newsroom/fact-sheet/details/child-maltreatment](http://www.who.int/home/newsroom/fact-sheet/details/child-maltreatment).
- [2] Violence Against Children (No Date) World Health Organization. Available At: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-children> (Accessed: 17 October 2023).
- [3] Mendelson T, Letoureneau E J. Parent Focused Prevention Of Child Sexual Abuse. *Prevention Science*. 2015mar12;844-52. Available From [Http://Doi.Org/10.1007/s11121-015-0553-z](http://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-015-0553-z).
- [4] Sujatha T, Dhivya V P, Padmakala M. A Study To Assess The Mother's Awareness On Child Abuse In Maraimalai Nagar, *International Journal Of Pharmaceutical And Clinical Research*. 2019may25;11(2):74-8

- [5] Jacob J, Kumar K. A Study To Assess The Knowledge Regarding Child Abuse Among Mother's In Selected Residential Areas Of Delhi-Ncr.2018 Dec;7(6): 29-32.
- [6] Swapna M K. A Study To Assess The Level Of Knowledge Regarding The Prevention Of Child Among Mothers In Selected Rural Areas Of Haryana. Ijrrsh. 2019 Mar;9(3):706–12.
- [7] Yadav N, Kumari N, Parameshwari, Pooja, Poonia P, Bairwa P K. Et Al.. Knowledge Regarding Prevention Of Child Abuse Among Parents At Selected Rural Area Of Western Rajasthan. Int J Community Med Public Health [Internet]. 2020 Dec. 25 [Cited 2023 Nov. 21];8(1):212-6. Available From: <https://www.ijcmph.com/index.php/ijcmph/article/view/7161>
- [8] Yadav N, Kumari N, Parameshwari, Pooja, Poonia P, Bairwa P K. Et Al.. Knowledge Regarding Prevention Of Child Abuse Among Parents At Selected Rural Area Of Western Rajasthan. Int J Community Med Public Health [Internet]. 2020 Dec. 25 [Cited 2023 Nov. 21];8(1):212-6. Available From: <https://www.ijcmph.com/index.php/ijcmph/article/view/7161>
- [9] Yadav N, Kumari N, Parameshwari, Pooja, Poonia P, Bairwa P K. Et Al.. Knowledge Regarding Prevention Of Child Abuse Among Parents At Selected Rural Area Of Western Rajasthan. Int J Community Med Public Health [Internet]. 2020 Dec. 25 [Cited 2023 Nov. 21];8(1):212-6. Available From: <https://www.ijcmph.com/index.php/ijcmph/article/view/7161>
- [10] Nair M, Rajmohan K, Remadevi S, Gosh C, Leena M. Child Disciplining Practices In Kerala [Internet]. [Cited 2023 Nov 14]. Available From: <https://www.indianpediatrics.net/suppl2009/sup-s83-s85.htm>.
- [11] Mohan S, Kochuthressiamma T, Joice S. Knowledge, Attitude And Practices On Prevention Of Child Sexual Abuse Among Mothers In Tertiary Setting. Ijsr.2017 Nov; 6(11).382-5.
- [12] National Academies Of Sciences, Engineering, And Medicine; Division Of Behavioral And Social Sciences And Education; Board On Children, Youth, And Families; Committee On Supporting The Parents Of Young Children; Breiner H, Ford M, Gadsden VI, Editors. Parenting Matters: Supporting Parents Of Children Ages 0-8. Washington (Dc): National Academies Press (Us); 2016 Nov 21. 2, Parenting Knowledge, Attitudes, And Practices. Available From: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/Nbk402020/>
- [13] Kaur N, Kaur N. A Study To Assess The Knowledge Of Mothers With School Age Children Regarding Child Abuse And Its Prevention In Bhucho Mandi, Bathinda (Punjab). 2020 Jan 1 [Cited 2023 Oct 13];5(1):91-5. Available From: <https://www.academia.edu/42988100/>.
- [14] Rajeswar P M, Jayasudha A, Rodriguez Pm. A Study To Assess The Knowledge Regarding Child Abuse Among Mothers At Selected Urban Areas In Coimbatore. Jetir. 2022 Jan;9(1):679-83.
- [15] Lal Mm, Kaur S. A Study To Assess The Knowledge Regarding Child Abuse Among Mothers In Selected Areas Of Punjab. Ijsr.2021 Dec;10(12):1109-13.
- [16] Punithavathi R, Vimala N. The Level Of Knowledge, Attitude And Expressed Practices Regarding Prevention Of Child Abuse Among Mothers Having School Age Children In Selected Village Of Sivakasi.2016 [Internet]. [Cited 2023 Nov 23]. Available From: <http://Repository-Tnmgrmu.Ac.In/3150/1/3002222301416651> Kaleeswaris.Pdf